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THEY ate, they drank, and through the dark
The wedding torches flared ;
While gloomy Noah built his ark
The people stood and stared,

A motley gathering, squire and dame,
The laughter and the play,
Until the wild flood-waters came
And swept them all away.

December's sun in sullen red
Behind the Ritz goes down,
The naked plane-trees overhead
Dangle their balls of brown.

The dusk creeps up across the park,
The searchlights wheel and flare :
While gloomy Noah builds his ark
We young ones stand and stare.

A little life, a little light,
A dinner and a play,
For some go back to-morrow night
And some go back to-day,

To hear the bugle and the drum,
The cannon's roundelay,
Until the cold flood-waters come
And sweep us all away.

F.

UNCONQUERED: AN EPISODE OF 1914.¹

BY MAUD DIVER.

CHAPTER VII.

'Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won,
 Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed;
 And when a woman woos, what woman's son
 Will sourly leave her till she have prevailed?'

SHAKESPEARE.

THAT picnic on the farther shore of the loch marked a definite step in the progress of their intimacy.

Bel, in a distinctly coming-on disposition, proved herself at once a more enchanting and disturbing possession than Mark had found her hitherto. First she must discover a hollow full of bracken for his 'arm-chair'; then she must take possession of the tea-basket and proceed to 'play at being married' with all the airy innocence of nineteen. But nineteen never could have worked so simply yet skilfully on a man's heartstrings that, before their idyllic meal was over, the man in question found himself more than half regretting that promise to his mother. It was almost as if Bel had guessed at his defection and set out to punish him.

When tea was over he proffered his cigarette case. 'More demoralisation, I suppose?'

'No; the reward of virtue!' she said, deftly extracting one with each hand.

'I say! Sheer greed! What about virtue being its own reward?'

She wrinkled her nose very prettily. 'Can't say I've ever found it so. But then—I'm not over-burdened with virtue. So I'm entitled to the reward!'

'Not in that form. You're my wife this afternoon!'

'So you can be as hectoring as you please? At that rate I vote we remain engaged to the end of the chapter!'

'Bel—if you talk like that, I'll marry you to-morrow,' he threatened her, tempted beyond endurance; but she was gravely considering her two cigarettes. Then, lifting her lashes, she regarded him with lazy tenderness. 'I'll be very good,' she said, 'and give up one of them in exchange—for a kiss!'

Thus challenged, he seized her and kissed her vehemently—lips, eyes and hair.

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'Oh—oh!' she breathed, half in ecstasy, half in remonstrance; and he desisted, without releasing her.

'You brought it on yourself,' he said huskily. 'Bel—you're a witch. You *do* know how to make a man crazy for you.'

Her sigh expressed contentment unabashed. But she seemed chiefly concerned with the cigarette in her left hand. It was crumpled into a limp wreck.

'There now, you've killed the poor thing,' she said, holding it up for his inspection. 'And I might just as well have enjoyed it. Do look at Bobs over there, disapproving visibly of your behaviour.'

Mark looked; and the Irish terrier's stump of a tail moved to and fro in small jerks. The rest of him remained motionless, watchful, nose between paws, obviously prepared for active intervention, if need arose.

'Good old Bobs!' murmured Mark; and two velvet ears, several shades darker than the chestnut head, twitched in response, as who should say: 'I appreciate the attention, but we can't enjoy ourselves properly till we're rid of her.'

Bel snapped her fingers in friendly invitation. But he paid no heed. 'He's quite uncomfortably human, that dog, and he hasn't accepted me yet. He's a jealous red-head, like his master—almost as jealous as his master's mother!'

'Why do you think she's jealous?' Mark asked, instinctively on the defensive at the mention of her name.

'I don't think. I know. It's quite natural. I should be horribly jealous—of *my* son.'

'You would—would you?' he asked in a changed voice; and she, resting her head against him, answered nothing. Possibly she thought the allusion might induce him to speak more definitely of their marriage; but he merely continued to hold her, more gently now, and to stroke her ruffled hair.

For several minutes they remained thus, thinking their own curiously divergent thoughts. Then by degrees she drew herself away, laid the crumpled cigarette on his knee and put the other between her lips. 'Light, please,' she said, and as he held the match for her, she looked searchingly into his eyes.

'Bel—' he began vehemently; but she checked him with a gesture. 'Pax! I want to enjoy my cigarette unmolested. Tell me more about the Hampshire home. I've heard next to nothing about it yet.'

She settled herself to listen, hands lightly clasped round her

knees, her eyes gazing dreamily out over the water. Like all women who pose habitually and instinctively, she had the art of seeming more natural than genuine simplicity can ever appear. And she had touched the right spring. If Mark loved any place in the world better than Inveraig, it was Wynchcombe Friars. His feeling for both was too personal, too deep-seated to be articulate ; but he could at least describe externals ; and he did it well. He told her of the long, rambling Elizabethan house, with its oak panelling and dark roof beams ; of the great flagged terrace, flanked by moss-covered urns, overlooking a forest of Scotch firs that trooped down into the valley and climbed the opposite ridge in massed battalions.

'Outside my bedroom and studio windows,' he said, 'there's a very sea of pine tops, sinking into the hollow and rising again till they are splashed like dark foam against the sky. Grand old trees, most of 'em hundreds of years old. And the charm of it is that, on the other side of our ridge, behind the house, we drop down into typical English country ; meadows and park land, and the Wynch flowing lazily through it ; great lonely beeches and oaks, with all space to spread themselves in, and the grand old ruins of Wynchcombe Abbey. Oh, you'll simply love it. I'm longing to take you all over it.'

'I'm longing too. It sounds very beautiful,' she said with feeling ; then paused, as if picturing the scene. But her feminine brain was revolving matters more practical than pine forests and ruined abbeys.

'Horses to ride ?' she asked casually.

'Yes ; and to drive. We're not motor-folk really. But mother succumbed to one at last for long distances.'

'I'm glad. I love motoring. Are you within reasonable distance of town ?'

'Seven miles from a branch line station and bad connections. We usually motor to the main line thirteen miles off. But we're not great Londoners, either of us. We've too much that's keenly interesting on the spot.'

'Rather narrowing, isn't it ?'

'I haven't found it so.'

Again she was silent, contemplating the blurred beauty of inverted hills in the loch.

'And Wynchcombe Friars,' she asked, 'would be our main residence ?'

'Well—where else?' he said, smiling at her pensive profile and wondering what she was driving at. 'There's only this, besides. This is mother's little place—a legacy from a bachelor godfather. I don't run to half a dozen establishments.'

'But surely'—she turned to him now, half eager, half anxious—'surely you have a house in town?'

'Rather not. Don't want it, and couldn't afford it. I'm not a cocoa or a patent medicine millionaire. Keeping up two estates—though Inveraig is not large—takes a fair amount of money. And I've put a good deal into our arts and crafts centre.'

Her face fell so noticeably that he slipped a consoling hand through her arm. 'Poor little girl! Is it a house in town she's after?'

'Well, naturally I'—she coloured a little—'I thought—you kind of people always went the regular round—London, Scotland and the country.'

'So we do; the social sort. Mother and I aren't the social sort. I didn't suppose you were either.'

'I haven't had half a chance. But I'd like to be. A flat wouldn't ruin you, would it, Mark? Just for the season.'

This time it was his face that fell. 'Oh Lord! I could never stick out a London season, Bel. The very best time in the country too.'

'And I could never exist all the year round out of town.' She stated the fact sweetly but with entire conviction.

'Hang it all! This is rather a serious state of affairs!' he said, with a lightness he was far from feeling. 'We must see if we can't effect a compromise.'

Suddenly he remembered his mother's words a fortnight ago; and impulsively he spoke his thought. 'Of course if you feel—you've been let in; accepted a baronet under false pretences—'

'Oh be *quiet*!' she entreated, pain and passion in her low tone. 'It's *you* I've accepted.'

'And you'll take me as you find me? That's all right.' His fingers pressed her arm. 'You do care—actively, Bel? It's not simply a case of "L'un qui baise . . ."?'

It was a question to rouse the incurable coquette in her; and she flashed him a fugitive smile.

'In the course of my variegated life,' she said, 'I've mostly

found it more blessed to receive than to give. But, in your case— isn't my rather precipitate acceptance proof enough for you ? And the fact that you can reduce me—*me*, to asking for kisses ?'

'Oh—kisses !' he dismissed them with a shrug.

'Well—if it's more practical proof you're wanting'—she hesitated, then turned full upon him, her languor discarded like a garment, 'I simply can't bear this crazy talk about going to Ulster. It's no earthly concern of yours. Mark—darling, *don't* go, even if they are fools enough to fight.'

She leaned urgently towards him. Her whole sweet face looked younger, tenderer, more appealing than he had seen it since that momentous afternoon in the glen. So swift, so surprising was her change of front, that he looked openly dismayed.

'You don't seem very keen on practical proofs after all,' she said, bringing her face a shade nearer to his. 'I did think your mother would have the sense to discourage you.'

He shook his head. 'Mother understands.'

'That really means she gives in to your every whim. It's the way mothers are made. Specially when they own a son with a chin like yours ! But the modern wife isn't quite so accommodating. And I suppose my feeling about it counts for something ?'

'Of course it does—tremendously.'

'Then say you won't go ; and there'll be no more bother.'

He thrust out his formidable chin and looked across the loch with troubled eyes.

'Darling,' she persisted, 'where's the *point* of mixing yourself up with a purely Irish quarrel ?' He shrugged his shoulders, still keeping his eyes away from her face.

'I suppose—a natural prompting of the blood. Mother's a Stuart, of these parts, with a strain of north Ireland in her ; and there's a link between Ulster and the south-west of Scotland that only those who belong there quite understand. The two coasts are so close at points that in very old days men could row to and fro in ordinary sea-boats. And it's not a purely Irish quarrel, Bel. It's of the first importance that the United Kingdom should remain united—especially just now. Nothing would suit Germany better than Home Rule and "Ireland-a-nation" before she throws off her mask. Personally, I admit I'm keen for a share in the scrap, if it comes to scrapping. I've the blood of fighters in my veins. But of course—if you're dead against it——'

'I *am* dead against it,' she said, softly implacable, edging closer still. 'And *you're* too strong to be obstinate. Mark—

you're not going to refuse the first thing I seriously ask you to do for me ?'

Her low-toned tenderness disarmed him utterly. 'No, I'm not,' he said, with sudden vehemence, drawing her to him. 'I won't go to Ireland, Bel. No need to worry any more.'

With a sigh of relief, she put her free arm round his shoulder, lifted her head and kissed him on the lips. It was the first time she had done so spontaneously; and, at the moment, it eased considerably his bitter sense of disappointment. He said nothing, however; and for the rest of the evening Bel was all tenderness and simplicity: not a shadow of coquetry to mar the effect.

'I think my concession deserves a special reward,' he said later on, as he grounded the boat under Inverraig and handed her ashore. 'You might chuck your Harry for once and come on up to dinner.'

But she demurred at that. Honestly she couldn't chuck Harry to-night. Considering Harry's views and her devotion and her resentment, she was taking it all beautifully—in the intervals. 'She's done more for me in three years,' Bel concluded, 'than my own people have in the rest of my life. So you oughtn't to grudge her the crumbs that fall from your table! You've monopolised me all day; and she hates being alone in the evening.'

'Bring her along then. I don't mind.'

'Perhaps not, Mr. Egoist. But she would. She wants me to herself, just as you do. Don't you see?'

Mark grimaced. 'No. I don't see. A couple of women. Morbid rot! Mother says the suffrage business is increasing that sort of thing. I'll be glad to get you out of the atmosphere and away from all that rescue work of hers.'

'But, Mark, it's splendid work——'

'Of course it is, for her. Quite unsuitable, though, for you. If you really won't come up, I'll see you home.'

No, she really wouldn't. She was resolute on that point.

'Your people up there have had enough of me to-day,' she added, smiling into his dissatisfied face. 'They're like Bobs. They haven't quite accepted me yet. And—honestly, I don't seem to catch on, somehow, except with Mr. Lenox——'

'Not Sheila?' he asked, a little anxiously. 'I'm very keen you two should be good friends.'

'She evidently knows that, and she's doing her best. She's sweetness itself to me. But still——'

'Well? What's wrong with her?' He was on the defensive again.

'My dear, there's nothing wrong. If there was, she'd probably be twice as charming. She's the kind of tranquil angel who would show up beautifully against a tragic background. But, in ordinary life, she seems almost too good to be true.'

'She's nothing of the kind,' he retorted hotly, which did not improve matters. But, for the life of him, he could not keep cool. 'She's the right sort all through.'

'Well, if she's such a living wonder, why on earth don't you marry her instead of me?' Bel countered with perfect good temper.

'For a very obvious reason, which you don't deserve to be told in so many words.'

'Mark, you're horrid!' she pushed him lightly with her shoulder. 'Don't let's spoil our beautiful afternoon squabbling over a side issue. No doubt we shall shake down together in the end. Only give us time.'

Her sweet reasonableness disarmed him—for the moment. But he was a long while falling off to sleep that night. Things did not easily worry him; but within the last twelve hours several events of more than minor importance had conspired to that end.

First, Bel's frankness made it clear that at Inverraig she found no atmosphere of genuine welcome or of home. He must give them time, as she had said; but it was an unpropitious start. Second, he had, in effect, saddled himself with two promises that would be far from easy to keep. Third, there was the unwelcome prospect of that possible flat in town. If Bel seriously set her heart on it, he did not see himself refusing her; though goodness knew where the money was coming from, or how he was going to survive large doses of London society. Son of a mother who treated life as an art, he lacked the herd-instinct of the social type. But for all her indulgence, and his own imperious ways, he was not radically selfish; and beneath his blunt, Scottish exterior there dwelt a deep, natural tenderness for woman, as woman, common to the essentially masculine man.

Marriage, he supposed, meant compromise; and he began to see that, with Bel for wife, he would have to do his full share of it. Looking back over their 'beautiful afternoon,' he was uncomfortably aware of certain fundamental discords; still more aware that

his mother had been right in several respects. It was an annoying trick of hers. She had been right about Ulster ; about Bel's eye to worldly advantage ; even about the minor matter of her age. For Mark had discovered, incidentally, that she was twenty-nine in June, two years older than himself. Not that a year or so mattered this way or that. But it was an additional score for his mother ; and gave greater weight to her curious antipathy for this girl, of all others.

His disappointment about Ulster was keener even than he cared to admit ; and here again—as his acutely wide-awake brain recalled words and looks and tones—a sudden vexatious doubt assailed him. Had her tenderly urgent request been as spontaneous as it seemed : a genuine response to his question about active caring ? Or had she been skilfully leading him towards it all along ; working him up, in her own inelegant phrase ? Her pretty coquetting with the tea-things, her pretence at being married, and her casual mention of a son—had it all been cleverly designed to stir him to the depths and so make victory secure ? He hated himself for the suspicion. It persisted none the less. Yet he knew quite well that it would evaporate at the sight of her face and the touch of her lips. Only when the spell of her presence was removed was he capable of doubting her for an instant ; and even so, he saw those doubts as a reflection on himself rather than on her. He was tired, simply ; and—yes, more than a little disappointed. That was all ; and the sooner he got to sleep the better.

Springing out of bed he stood a few minutes at the window looking out upon a world of stars in the heavens above and the waters below. Fitfully, through the silence, came the clear night note of the curlew ; and the sound of the ebbing tide was like hushed voices talking secrets the stars must not overhear. As a small boy, lying wakeful in the summer twilight, Mark had woven entrancing tales about those mysterious confidences between the retreating waters and the shore : tales that had become part of the fabric of his inner life.

A few deep breaths filled his lungs with clean cool air and quieted his brain. Metaphorically, he wrung the serpent's neck and flung him into the loch. Then he went quietly back to bed. Happen what might Bel was Bel : a bewildering wonder of womanhood, neither to be analysed nor criticised ; but simply to be loved and cherished and—so far as possible—obeyed.

CHAPTER VIII.

'England clasps in her embraces
Many. What is England's state?
Warn her, Bard, that Power is pressing
Hotly for his dues this hour:
Tell her that no drunken blessing
Stops the onward march of Power.

Has she ears to take forewarnings,
She will cleanse her of her stains;
Feed and speed, for braver mornings,
Valourously, the growth of brains.'

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Two days later the head-lines of every newspaper in the kingdom announced in heavy-led type 'Austria declares War,' 'Partial Russian Mobilisation.'

At hundreds of breakfast-tables incredulous people read out those few and fateful words. Even at this late hour, the majority could scarcely bring themselves to believe that the Titanic struggle—long prophesied to deaf ears—had begun at last; that Austria was the megaphone merely through which Germany cried aloud her challenge to the world.

Keith Macnair, it need hardly be said, was numbered among the minority who had seen, with anger and dismay, warning after warning scoffed at or ignored by a pacific Government and a comfort-loving people; yet he neither exclaimed, nor cursed the blind guides who had been sedulously whittling down the fighting strength of the British Isles.

'Hullo! The fat's in the fire,' he remarked coolly, having pulled in his chair and opened the *Scotsman* with his customary deliberation. 'The voice is the voice of Jacob; but the hand is the hand of Esau.'

It was Lady Forsyth, standing behind him, who exclaimed and read out snatches from the Summary of Contents with heightened colour and quickened breath.

Though Keith had all the natural man's objection to these peculiarly feminine methods, he bore the infliction without a murmur, till Mark, towering behind his mother, took her waist between his hands and propelled her towards the sputtering kettle.

'Steady on, Mums, and feed your sheep,' he commanded, standing guard over her. 'Your righteous wrath will only give

you indigestion, and the elderly gentlemen who are engineering this eruption won't be one penny the worse.'

'And you ought to be grateful to them really!' Mona remarked, with a wicked twinkle. 'What about the German invasion you were praying for?'

They all 'ragged' her, young and old. She was irresistible; and unquenchable.

'Well, at least we can fight invading Germans, and we couldn't fight the petticoats!' she retorted, while Mark thrust a caddy spoon into her inattentive hand. 'But it still remains to be seen whether our *pax vobiscums* will permit us to hurt a single hair of a single "kindred Teuton" head!'

The tea was made by now, thanks chiefly to Mark; and for five minutes she managed to concentrate her attention on cups and saucers. But throughout the meal they could talk of little else than the veiled drama of the nations and its probable developments. Mark himself was rather quieter than usual; but perhaps he thought the more.

When the younger ones went out on to the terrace, he followed Keith into the study, and for some time the two—who were as brothers in all but blood—sat together in a smoky, companionable silence, each absorbed in his own printed sheet. The Irish news was by no means reassuring. But Mark, to Keith's surprise, had tacitly dropped the subject; and it was the older man who spoke first.

'I'd give something for a glimpse, this minute, into Germany's barracks and her sacred Kiel Canal. If I know anything of the Kaiser and his gang, she's on the move already; counting on our neutrality of course. God send she may find herself mistaken; but Grey will leave no stone unturned to avoid war. As a philosopher and a man of letters, I'm with him there. But the rest of me is convinced that nothing short of Treitschke's "terrible medicine" will shake us out of our democratic fiddle-faddling and partisan squabbling. It would link up the men and women, not to mention the Empire; and as for the Irish—at the first hint of real business, they'd be falling on each other's necks. In that case, Mark, you and I would be for offering our services elsewhere.'

'Yes—of course. Rather so!' Mark agreed with fervour; then checked himself and fell silent.

Keith said nothing; but his thoughts were effectually diverted from the threat of war to a more personal threat that touched him very nearly, because Mark was Helen's son. Being a man, he

understood, as she could never do, the nature of Mark's infatuation for this alluring girl—'the ideal mistress' he classified her mentally; the siren-type, who sits combing her hair in the sunset and smilingly wrecks the souls of men. The straighter and cleaner a man's record, the more easily she flings her gold dust in his eyes; and should she chance to fall in love——

Macnair had not yet made up his mind on that score. He was concerned at the moment with one painful, practical question: could she, in the event of war, conceivably induce Helen's son to play the coward's part? He knew Mark for a man of strong passions; but he believed him equally strong in spirit and in will. He felt troubled and anxious none the less. Had he known of that recent surrender he would have felt more anxious still.

Mark left the study without further allusion to the subject; and later in the morning Bel appeared serenely graceful, in a new yellow silk golf coat and a distractingly becoming hat. With such a vision before his eyes no man in his senses could feel seriously concerned about European thunderclouds that might still, at the eleventh hour, dissolve in a harmless shower of rain.

Bel, of course, was airily convinced they would. 'Besides,' she concluded, with her engaging air of sagacity, 'where's the earthly use of being an island, with an invincible Navy, if we're to be scared by every little flare-up across the Channel?'

Mark smiled and shook his head at her. She was ensconced in the deep window-sill of the studio, lightly swinging one foot.

'It's not a case of being scared, but of being prepared,' he said, fingering the stray tendrils in the nape of her neck. 'If Germany's engineering this squabble it'll be the biggest flare-up the world's ever seen; and before many days are out we may be thanking Prince Louis on our knees for having kept the Fleet in being——'

'Oh, be quiet!' she commanded, slapping the hand that caressed her. 'You're as bad as Mr. Macnair.' She leaned half out of the window. 'It's a divine morning. A boat on the loch would be more to the purpose than all your horrid battleships put together. Here comes the midday post.'

'*The Times*!' cried Mark, and was promptly extinguished.

'You aren't going to look at *The Times* till to-night,' she said. 'You're to look at me in my new clothes. What else did I put them on for?'

The word 'clothes' reminded him of an expected parcel. 'You wait there a minute,' he said mysteriously; and very soon

reappeared with two of them. From the smaller, he extracted a rope of amber beads ; from the larger, a snow leopard skin, lined with satin, to form a natural cloak.

Bel's face, during these proceedings, was certainly better worth looking at than *The Times*. The beads were the very colour of her coat ; the pale tones and dusky markings of the skin harmonised perfectly with her hair ; and her delight in both was too genuine to be marred by minor affectations. By lunch-time Mark had almost forgotten the International Crisis, and the threat of war.

But throughout that unforgettable week—when the world's destiny hung in the balance—events in Europe moved swiftly toward the great upheaval ; while in England the tension of anxiety increased daily. Between those who feared that an enlightened Liberal Government would be criminal enough to fight, and those who feared the worse criminality of its failure to stand by France, there could be little peace of mind anywhere, except among the wilfully or constitutionally blind—a large majority in every country.

At Inverraig they could talk of little else, except in snatches. And Mark—reared by his mother to live in touch with the whole vast sweep of life—was as bad as the rest : though Bel, in her leopard-skin cloak and amber beads, was a vision enchanting enough to distract any man's thoughts from graver matters : and indeed she did her utmost to that end with fitful success. In her heart she hated this looming shadow, chiefly because it dwarfed her proudest achievement—the conquest of Mark : and as the week drew on, she became bored ; even faintly irritable. She began to find or invent excuses for avoiding meals at Inverraig, and when Mark remonstrated, she candidly owned to being tired of the subject. She wasn't accustomed to that sort of talk, and a little of it went a long way. She would give him a holiday on Friday, she concluded graciously. They had friends coming to join them at The Rowans—Mr. and Miss Maitland from his part of the world.

Mark raised his eyebrows. 'Maitland ?'

'Yes. He's classical master at High Rough School. D'you know him ?'

'M—slightly. I've not much use for him. Sort of chap whose veins run ink instead of blood.'

She flushed a little and lifted her head. 'He's a great friend of mine ; so you needn't make rude remarks.'

'A great friend ?'

Mark bent a searching glance upon her.

'Yes; in his lukewarm way.'

'Oh, if he's lukewarm, he'll do! Didn't I say his veins ran ink? I'll let you be polite to him on Friday, and I must have Saturday afternoon and evening entire as a reward!'

But even while they talked, Europe hummed with the stir of gathering armies; and by Saturday morning the head-lines announced 'Russian Mobilisation Complete.' Germany, who had secretly forestalled that event, responded by declaring a state of war, and an impenetrable veil fell between her and the outer world.

Keith handed the paper to Mark, who had come in late for breakfast. 'There you are, old boy. I said the end of the month, didn't I? Russia brings in France automatically. It only remains for Italy and England to show their hands. I back Italy to keep hers clean and stay out of it.'

'And I back England to fight.'

'Yes—if we've still enough of the old leaven to save us from the curse of legal verbiage and inaction.'

For the rest of the meal he confined himself to intermittent 'rumblings' (the word was Lady Forsyth's) against peace-cranks, Internationals, and so forth; but it was not till he had talked for half an hour on the telephone to a friend at the Athenæum Club that he really let himself go—an event as rare as the proverbial 'blue moon.'

For it transpired that his friend—a professor of distinction—had just set his signature to a neutrality letter strongly protesting against England's intervention in a Continental quarrel.

'Continental quarrel, forsooth! And the damned fools, not content with their egregious letter, are moving heaven and earth—that's to say International and Labour lights—to get up a Neutrality Committee, by way of further assisting a divided Government that stands shivering on the brink. Here we are, sunk deep in the ruts of peace in its most repellent form—peace, that has almost landed us in Civil War; yet responsible men and women cry out against our taking the only course that can conceivably save half Europe, including ourselves, from the domination of the German machine.'

His quiet grey eyes had a glint of steel in them, as he stood there beside the telephone in the study, swept, by intensity of conviction, so completely out of his philosophic calm, that Helen

and Mark, the natural talkers, never dreamed of interposing a word. On the rare occasions when the spirit of speech moved him, they were willing to listen *ad infinitum*.

He had descended to a lower plane now, and was confounding the tyranny of the week-end habit, the curse of the country, that would send responsible people scuttling out of town on a Friday, though the last trump were sounding in their ears. He also confounded, for the first time in his life, that sacrosanct institution the Scottish Sunday, which would cut them off from letters, telegrams, and papers for twenty-four hours.

'Never mind, old man, we've got the blessed telephone,' Mark consoled him, clapping a hand on his shoulder. 'And we can jolly well make ourselves a nuisance to all our friends and relations. What else is a telephone for? I vote we run down to Glasgow on Monday and sleep the night. We'd feel a bit closer to things—'

An imperious tinkle interrupted him. Admiral Sir John Forsyth this time. Unlike the heads of the political world, he had come up post-haste from Dorset, and he wanted a few words with his nephew.

It was while these things were in progress that Bel arrived, eager for a sight of Mark, and found herself relegated to the drawing-room with Sheila and Mona for company. Sheila apologised in her friendliest fashion; but that was quite beside the point. The appearance of the tea-tray brought in Lady Forsyth; but not till tea was half over did the telephone release Mark. Then at last came her chance of escape; and the lovers wandered off through the pine copse on to the small patch of open moor overlooking the loch.

'A shame to keep her waiting,' he apologised tenderly. 'But this is history, darling, on a tremendous scale; so you must make allowances.'

'I'm trying to.' She drooped her lips with a bewitching air of martyrdom. 'But tremendous things are rather exhausting. I can't get into a state of thrill, like your mother and the rest. And I'm very glad—you may think what you like!—that there really is a chance we shall keep out of it. Mr. Maitland says Sir Edward Grey has admitted that the Entente's not binding, and a Liberal Government *can't* drag a free people into the horrors of war.'

'Damn Maitland!' Mark flashed out; then reddened and drew in his lip. 'Sorry. But if you don't want fireworks you'd better keep that chap's inspired remarks to yourself. Besides, you're

practically one of us now ; and I can't have you talking pacifist twaddle.'

'Well, don't let's talk of it at *all*. I'm sick of the whole thing.'

Mark said nothing, and they walked on in silence through the heather. Then she turned to him and slipped a hand through his arm. 'Darling, let's go off somewhere to-morrow for the whole day and forget all about everything, except each other.'

'Bel!' He stood regarding her with an enigmatical smile. For an instant she thought he would consent. 'I'd love to, of course,' he said honestly. 'But I simply couldn't do it. Though we can't get papers, there's the telephone ; and, honestly, my mind would be on the stretch the whole time.'

She shrugged, with a faint reflection of his smile. 'Very well. I'll join the others. They're going for an outing in any case. Your Scotch Sunday is so desolating.'

'Then I'll call in for you after supper, if you're not too tired. Keith and I are going to Glasgow on Monday for the night. See how they're taking things there.'

She sighed. 'This wretched war is simply spoiling everything.' Her shoulder touched his as she spoke, and at once he put his arm round her. 'It seems to shut me out.'

'Only because you refuse to come in.'

'But, Mark—it's such a horror.' Her shiver was not pure affectation. 'And I've no taste for horrors. I can feel it hovering there, across the Channel, like a tiger waiting to spring. And when I try to forget it, you don't help me. As you *won't* come to-morrow, I shall console myself by asking Mr. Lenox. I like him the best of your lot.'

'All right ; ask him. He can keep an eye on you. See that you don't flirt with Maitland.'

'But I do—always. It's an understood thing between us. And if I can't have you, I must get what fun I can out of him !'

Maurice, though feeling the strain in his own way, accepted Bel's invitation, plus her proviso that no one was to say 'War' or 'Politics' from start to finish. Privately she felt Mark's defection more keenly than she cared to admit, but she intended to enjoy herself in spite of it ; and she succeeded, by the primitive process of playing the two men off against each other. Maitland—a loose-limbed narrowly built person of nondescript colouring—had for years been discreetly in love with her. He was of those for whom discretion is the better part of everything. But the moth persisted

in hovering round the candle, and he had heard with a mild pang of her engagement to Sir Mark.

Like many schoolmasters of second-rate quality, Maitland was less a man of intellect than of specialised culture. Years of close touch with the 'humanities' had failed to make him human. He was humanitarian, merely: a very different pair of sleeves.

Maurice, watching him with Miss Alison, saw the girl in a new light, and wondered a little what Forsyth would think about it. But on his return he simply remarked that Maitland seemed the sort of schoolmaster who disseminated ignorance; that Miss Alison had been in great form, and they had had a ripping day.

Early on Monday afternoon the two men set out for Glasgow; and to Lady Forsyth the house, bereft of their presence, seemed a dead thing. A man's woman, in the finest sense of the phrase, her men were the first best gifts of God to her. She was their born comrade. She had the rare gift of seeing life with their eyes; and through her nature ran a streak of inconsistency, peculiarly endearing to the more consistent half of creation.

Even in the midst of her real anxiety lest a Government wedded to peace should withhold England from the path of honour and safety, her sensitive spirit revolted against the oncoming holocaust of death and suffering, with a fierce intensity of which Bel's nature was purely incapable. She felt it as a vast thundercloud, stealthily, inexorably blotting out the light of heaven. These days of waiting—days of tense and awful quiet for all who were far from the throbbing heart of things—were as the pause of utter stillness that precedes the crash of the storm. And in that stillness she could see and feel too vividly things that filled her with a shuddering dread. The whole world's sorrow seemed to beat upon her heart, and at intervals through the vast diapason of universal anguish came the piercing note of personal pain.

She knew—triumphantly, yet shiveringly she knew—what it would mean for her if England went into the war, not merely as a protective Power, but as a united Empire to challenge conclusions with her most insidious and most formidable enemy. Mark would go out to France; and he would lose no time in going. That was his way. He had said no word of it, so far, either to her or Bel. But she knew his intention, if the girl did not; and even while she shrank from the surrender of her last best treasure, she never dreamed of withholding him. If it were really to be war on a big scale, everything, everyone must go. . . .

CHAPTER IX.

'Thy trumpet lies in the dust . . .

Help me to don my armour !

Let hard blows of trouble strike fire into my life.

Let my heart beat in pain—beating the drum of thy victory.

My hands shall be utterly emptied to take up thy trumpet.'

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

'WAR declared—at last !' Keith remarked, in his quiet impressive voice ; and Lady Forsyth heard the words with an odd mingling of relief and dread.

The next moment she was startled by a stab of almost physical pain near her heart. That it was not physical she knew very well. Instinctively she glanced at Mark, whose eyes were already on her face ; and there passed between them a swift, unspoken message that eased the hearts of both.

Breakfast, usually a cheerful meal, was rather a silent affair ; and the minute it was over Lady Forsyth slipped away to her turret room. Sheila was helping Ralph pack, that he might hurry down south and report himself at the India Office. Mark had gone off to the study with Keith ; and Lady Forsyth had been sitting in her chair by the window for nearly half an hour before she heard his step outside the door.

She turned, with his name on her lips ; but her throat felt constricted, and no sound came.

In response to that mute appeal, he dropped on one knee beside her and laid his hands in her lap. It was his old boyish trick when he came to confess a delinquency and knew himself forgiven in advance.

'Mother,' he said, 'we've got to put *everything* into this, you and I—to the uttermost farthing. All our men must go. And I must give 'em the lead myself.'

His voice was steady, and there was a light in his eyes that she had never seen there yet. For all her courage, her own smile was a rather misty affair.

'You're my uttermost farthing,' was all she could say.

'Yes. It's bitter hard luck on you. But—you don't grudge my going ?'

She shook her head. 'The greater my treasure, the greater my gift. This widow's mite is a very large mite !' she added, smiling bravely now, and passing her hands slowly over his broad shoulders down to his elbows where they rested.

For answer he looked steadily into her eyes. The faint, yet perceptible barrier raised by his engagement was levelled utterly; the old blessed sense of comradeship restored. Friction between them was purely a surface affair. The moment they touched fundamentals, they were one. And Mark, for his part, was aware of a restfulness in this deeper understanding; a restfulness that he had missed of late without knowing it.

He knew now, very well; and she saw that he knew: but all he said was 'I was sure I could count on you. Keith approves, of course. I rather thought of going down at once with Ralph. You know—it's enlisting I'm after. The quickest way——'

'Oh Mark—*not* that!' Her hands went up in protest; and, for the first time, there was sharp pain in her voice.

'Now be a good Mums and listen without interrupting,' he commanded, imprisoning her hands. 'We're simply going to have the biggest rush to the colours that the world's ever seen. I'm sure of it. And it's up to us "aristocratic noodles" to give the sacred working-men, of our sacred democracy, a thumping good lead. That's what I meant about my own fellows. Thought you understood——'

'But, my dear——' she checked herself, half laughing. 'Have you done? May I interrupt now?'

'You have interrupted! Always do. Go ahead!'

'Well, this is how *I* feel about it. Scores and scores of our blessed noodles will enlist, for the very reason you've given. The thing will be overdone, and if there's a shortage anywhere, it'll be among the officers. Then the wrong sort of men will get commissions and numbers of the right sort will remain stuck in the ranks: one way of democratising the Army! Horrible idea! I believe, as you very well know, in the true aristocracy of breeding and character, in its duties even more than its privileges; and above all in its innate spirit of leadership, that can be trained but not made. That's why—especially in a war that will exceed all others in horror and intensity—I strongly object to wholesale squandering of officer material, our most precious possession.'

'But, mother, I'm *not* an officer,' Mark protested, adding with a twinkle: 'you're having a jolly long innings, you know!'

'Well, I must speak now. It's my only chance. And you're officer material, Mark. You'd make a fine one, with a minimum of training. You've got it in you. Will you—for once admit I may be in the right?'

He regarded her quizzically. 'I was determined not to, when you started.'

'Well, at least consult Keith and Uncle John and Uncle Everard before you do anything drastic! You wouldn't have to wait long for a commission. We've heaps of interest—Frank Gordon and Jim Stuart, not to mention others, would do anything for you in that line. I don't want to be selfish or unpatriotic, but you've admitted it comes hard on me. Why make it needlessly harder?'

To her entire amazement he flung his arms round her and leaned his head against her shoulder.

'You blessed little mother,' he said under his breath. 'You're as plucky as they're made. Our share in this war shall begin with a private victory for you! And let's hope it may be a good omen!'

Taking her head between his hands he kissed her fervently, and she clung to him without a word.

At last he sighed and stood up, very erect, looking out across the sunlit water to the shadowy hills. Her eyes took the same direction; but the familiar scene was no more than a bright quivering blue of colour. For a moment they both felt oddly shy of each other.

Presently it passed, and Helen looked up at her son. 'I can't say what I'm feeling, Mark. But I don't think you'll regret my victory. Besides, there's Bel.'

'Yes. Poor Bel,' he said in a changed voice. 'She hates the whole business. And she'll hate it worse than ever now. But if she plays up as you have, she'll do!' He glanced at his watch. 'She'll be here in a minute. I must go and meet her. Don't stay and brood alone, Mums. Go down and talk to Keith. He wants to rush into Ardmuir this morning and fix up a recruiting show for Friday. Sir Mark Forsyth in the chair! On Saturday I vote we go south. There'll be a thundering lot to do. This food panic's disgraceful. Famine, indeed! As if we hadn't a ship afloat.'

She put her hands to her temples. 'It makes one's head spin. I'll go soon, dear, but I must have a few minutes alone—to take it all in.'

So he left her, and went slowly downstairs with a preoccupied look in his eyes. It was scarcely the look of a lover eager to meet the beloved after two days' absence; and in truth his natural eagerness was dimmed by a lurking doubt as to how Bel would receive his announcement. The contrast between the utter confidence he had felt in his mother's acquiescence and his curious lack of confidence

in the girl he meant to make his wife hurt him horribly. He blamed himself for it, as a matter of course ; but deep down, he knew that doubt did not come readily to his nature ; that never yet had he doubted where he loved.

From the front door he caught sight of her at the far end of the drive, moving in her graceful, leisurely fashion, head bent, eyes on the ground. She was wearing the yellow silk golf coat and the amber beads, and the distractingly becoming hat ; and, of a sudden, Mark realised with a pang, how, in the last few days, the great issues at stake had dwarfed everything—even Bel.

But now that the tension was over, the die cast, her spell re-asserted itself ; and a great wave of tenderness flowed through him. It would be hateful having to leave her : but he was so made that the question of choice simply did not enter his head.

Now he hurried forward, convinced that so great an occasion must lift her above herself. It was always the same : at sight of her, doubt grew shamefaced—and fled.

Before he reached her, she looked up and waved with her parasol, and Bobs, suddenly recognising her, bounded forward with eloquent tongue and tail. While she was patting him, Mark came up and quietly slipped a hand through her arm.

‘That’s good,’ he said, with a sigh of satisfaction. ‘Come to our summer-house on the heather and have a talk.’

As he led her towards the copse she gave him one of her soft side-long glances, whether of scrutiny or affection it were hard to say.

‘Bobs is more demonstrative than his master.’

The answering flash of his eye and tongue were direct as his whole nature. ‘You won’t induce me to kiss you in the open drive by your base insinuations !’

And it was not till they reached the depth of the little wood that he came to a standstill ; a strange light of exaltation on his face. Then he drew her to him and kissed her with a still intensity of passion, as if he would make her understand the measure of his love before telling her that which, perversely taken, might seem to throw a doubt on it.

When he released her, she stood back a little and smiled on him, rosy from his kiss, hands laid lightly on his breast.

‘Are you as glad—as all that, to get her back ?’ she asked.

‘More than all that—heaps more. I agree with Robert Louis. Separation has its good points ! But we’ll soon be suffering from

too sharp a taste of it—scores of us. I suppose you deigned to glance at the head-lines this morning ?’

‘Yes, of course.’ She frowned. ‘It’s horrible—beyond belief. Rex says it simply means that, in spite of all our science and progress, the world’s not civilised yet.’

‘More fool he, to imagine it was. Patches of it are half-civilised, that’s about all. And enough too. Over-civilisation, goodness knows why, has a queer tendency to rot men’s souls. Makes the body too comfortable, perhaps.’

‘Rubbish ! That’s one of your fads just because you’re against progress.’

‘Not I, in the right direction. I’m only against the modern craze for rushing wildly round a fixed point and getting nowhere. This war may set the clock back, but I bet it’ll get us somewhere before it’s done with us.’

He was back at the unavoidable subject again ; and this time he resolved to have done with shilly-shallying.

They had reached the summer-house fronting moor and loch ; and as he stood aside to let her pass in, she said, smiling : ‘I like the way you barbarians justify your own point of view ! Anyway, I suppose you’re all satisfied now, and things will be a little more normal ?’

‘Normal ?’ His shock of surprise sounded in his tone. ‘How can they be normal when we’ve got to fight for our lives against a Power like Germany ? Who’d wish them to be ? I’m afraid you haven’t read much *more* than the head-lines, Bel. There’s no end to think of : no end to do. As soon as I’ve rounded up my fellows here, we must go back home and round ’em up there. I wanted to enlist myself, but mother’s persuaded me to apply for a commission. She’s splendid about it, and I’m counting on you to be the same.’

‘Mark !’ Her surprise was no less than his own. She sank upon a wooden seat near the window and looked up at him, with eyes that had gone suddenly chill and hard, like bits of blue glass. ‘Have you *quite* gone off your head ?’

Words and tone produced a horrid revulsion of feeling. But he answered her with studied quietness. ‘I was never saner in my life.’

She received that statement with a faint lift of her brows.

‘You can stand there and tell me—*me*—you’re going to fight in the most awful war there’s ever been, as calmly as if you were talking about ordering a new suit, in spite of all I said about Ulster ?’

'Ulster! Good Lord, you're not building on *that*? ' he cried, enlightened at last. 'My darling girl, can't you see for yourself that there's no shadow of comparison? That was a matter of personal choice. Something I could give up for your sake—and I did.'

'Well, if you really—care, you ought to give up this too. It's not fair on me, or your mother. Fighting is the soldiers' business. Leave it to them.'

'A few hundred thousand against millions—eh?'

'That's the Government's fault. Besides, we've plenty of Territorials and things.'

His short laugh sounded more impatient than amused.

'A lot you know about Territorials and things! They're thousands below strength. And anyway, Bel, it's not a question of Territorials—or of caring. It's a plain matter of duty.'

'Well, you've money and brains. You could do quite good work in lots of other ways.'

'And round up better chaps than myself to go out and fight for me? No, thank you! There'll be too many ready to take shelter behind that plausible excuse. If they feel they can do so honestly, let them. Anything I could do at home could be equally well done by mother and Keith. Did you happen to notice the "Call to Arms"? Do words like *that* leave you unmoved?'

'N-no. But it means common men, not men with big responsibilities like you.'

'Bel, that's pure quibbling. It says "All," and it means "All." Could any man, I ask you, with a shred of conscience or love for his country, read that and remain at home rotting round with recruits and committees? I couldn't, that's flat. This war is either a crusade or a meaningless horror. And for me—it's a crusade. I'm not talking hot air. There's too much of that in the papers already. I'm only trying to make you see that I've no choice. I can't stand outside—even for you.'

'That simply means you won't,' she said very low. He sighed and stood silent, baffled, yet unshaken, looking out over the sun-splashed heather. Then it occurred to him that, being a woman, persuasion might move her though argument failed.

He sank on one knee and put his arm round her. 'Darling,' he urged, 'I can't bear hurting you like this. War is cruelly hard on the women: but you only make things worse for us both if you let it come between us.'

He felt her stiffen under his hand. 'It has come between us utterly,' she said. 'All this week it's been getting worse. If you talk till all's blue, I shall never see this—with your eyes. So it just amounts to this. You must either give up your quixotic notion of patriotism, or . . . you must give up . . . me.'

She spoke with more than her usual deliberation. The words seemed to drop out clear and hard as pebbles.

'Bel! You don't mean that!' he cried, hurt to the quick. 'It would simply break my heart.'

His sincerity was so plain, that her own heart thrilled in response. She slipped a hand round his head. Her fingers drifted with a slow caressing movement over his hair; and her voice took its most seductive tone.

'Mark, darling, if that's true, keep me—keep me. I'm yours, if only . . . you'll stay out of the fighting!'

Instantly he released her and sprang to his feet—angry, miserable, desperate. Yet still, in his very desperation, he argued, pleaded, and exhorted her afresh: without result. He had struck the layer of adamant beneath her skin-deep tenderness. She could not, or would not, see things in their true proportion; and, finally, her hardness stung his pride into life.

'It's Maitland, I suppose, who's been perverting your mind,' he flung out angrily. 'Better marry him, if you're so keen on a husband who prefers to let others do his fighting for him.'

At that she swept to her feet, the incarnation of dignity, and looked him full in the eyes. 'Rex has nothing whatever to do with it. And your other suggestion doesn't deserve an answer.' She stood silent a moment; but he neither spoke nor moved. Then: 'I—I'm going now,' she said. 'We shall be leaving here very soon.'

'No hurry. We're going ourselves on Saturday.' He was watching her fingers. She had drawn off his ring, and now she tendered it him without a word.

Still he made no move.

'Take it,' she whispered, 'it's yours—now!'

'I've no use for the beastly thing,' he answered between his teeth, and lifting it from her palm he flung it out into the heather.

Her dignity and coldness went to pieces in a flash. 'Oh Mark—what a sin!' she cried sharply; and hurrying out, she knelt down and began feeling, with fingers that shook a little, for her vanished treasure.

Mark, watching her from the threshold of the summer-house, did not so much as notice that faint tremor. The red mist of anger clouded his brain.

'So much for a woman's sense of proportion!' he said bitterly. 'It's not a sin for you to smash me up because I refuse to play the shirker. But it's a sin to chuck away fifty pounds' worth of diamonds. Money's sacred—if nothing else is. Keep it if you find it, or it'll go straight into the loch.'

As she rose to answer him, her eye lighted on the gleaming thing, and with a sigh of relief she picked it up. 'Sooner than that, I will keep it, though I can't wear it,' she said. 'Besides, you may think better of this.'

'Not until the Germans do,' he answered, and she knew he meant it. 'Don't return any other trifles, or they'll go the same way as the ring.'

'Then I suppose—it's good-bye.'

Her voice shook ever so little. But at that moment her very tears would scarce have moved him.

'Oh, good-bye,' he said casually, his face hard as a rock. 'Whatever happens, let's preserve the decencies.'

She caught her breath as if he had struck her; then turning she walked away through the heather, gracefully, deliberately, with the familiar swing of her parasol at each step; even as he had seen her walking towards him half an hour ago.

He had blamed himself for doubting her, and she had justified his doubts up to the hilt. In spite of the dull pain and anger within him, his eyes followed her, clung to her, till the last gleam of her yellow coat disappeared among the trees.

Then, with the look of a man stunned, he sat down near the window ledge and bowed his head upon his arms.

(To be continued.)

*TWO BROTHERS: LORD ELCHO AND
IVO CHARTERIS.*

SINCE this fatal War began, revealing to us as in a lightning flash the beauty and glory it robs us of, five young descendants of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the Irish rebel and patriot, have, as the fine and noble phrase goes, 'Fallen in Action.'

Percy Wyndham, the only son of Mr. George Wyndham and Countess Grosvenor; George Heremon Wyndham, one of the two sons of Colonel Wyndham, C.B.; Ivo Alan Charteris and Lord Elcho, the youngest and eldest living sons of the Earl and Countess of Wemyss; and Edward Wyndham Tennant, the eldest son of Lord and Lady Glenconner.

All these boys were gifted in no common degree with beauty, charm, intellect, character, and imagination. To think of them, and many like them, taken away in their gay beauty and goodness, with, so far as we can see it, their lovely promise unfulfilled, is to realise that something is wrong with a world of which such a sacrifice is exacted. In times of peace the world did not know that such radiant creatures existed. The Wyndhams—to comprise them within that name—were certainly figures of Romance: and the War has taken away others as beautiful. The Flower of Youth, of Kindness, of Gentleness, lies withered on many and many a battlefield. But the soul that gave the Flower its living beauty has gone scatheless, 'in trailing clouds of glory,' to the Source from which it derived its life and light.

The fighting man has been revealing himself in many ways. He has become vocal. Never was there such an age of great letter-writing. There was a time—about the beginning of the War—when we used to cut out the first great letters and paste them in a book. They were the first drops in a shower. After a time the number of the great letters which found their way into the newspapers was so many that one was unable to cope with it. One's admiration even grew jaded. In their varying degrees all those letters from the Front were wonderful. Self-consciousness had disappeared from that world. The letter-writers were in the midst of the great things. Life, Death, Suffering, Sacrifice, Loyalty, *Comradeship*, Love: all the littlenesses of the world had fallen away from them. When they wrote it was heart speaking to heart,

deep answering deep. So our simple soldiers became men of letters; and it would seem that the War has given us an imperishable literature of its own.

The two brothers of whom this article would make something of a record for the outside world—such a little and partial record as can be circumscribed within a few thousand words—are Ivo Alan Charteris, who fell at Loos on October 17, 1915, aged nineteen, and Hugo Francis (Lord Elcho), who fell at Katia, Egypt, on Easter Sunday, 1916, in his thirty-second year. Of these two brothers one may say with Emerson:

‘It seems an injury that he should leave us in the midst of his broken task which none else can finish: a kind of indignity to so noble a soul that it should depart out of Nature before yet he has been shown to his peers for what he is; but he, at least, is content. His soul was made for the noblest society: he had in a short life exhausted the capabilities of this world: wherever there is knowledge, wherever there is virtue, wherever there is beauty, he will find a home.’

Ivo Charteris, to whom I give precedence because he fell some six months before his brother, was a born letter-writer. The gift had descended to him direct from the Fitzgeralds. The Duchess of Leinster, Lord Edward’s mother, her sister, Lady Sarah Napier, her other sisters, in varying degrees, as well as her children, possessed the eighteenth-century gift of letter-writing. Lord Edward Fitzgerald’s letters are to-day as fresh as a rose. The gift has come down as well to this generation of the family. I wish I could quote largely from the correspondence of these great-great-grandchildren of Lord Edward Fitzgerald: since it is impossible, I must content myself with a scrap of a letter, here and there.

Ivo Charteris was a somewhat delicate and sensitive boy. In the picture I have of him there is something profoundly sad in his expression, perhaps the sadness which struggles to communicate to us, less fortunate, that such as he are of the Pre-destined to die young. But sadness was not at all his predominant quality. His letters give abundant evidence of his gaiety. He had great zest of life, great love for his family, especially the mother, who seems to receive her full measure, pressed down and flowing over, of worship from her gifted sons—is it not a characteristic of remarkable men to adore the Mother? He loved Nature and animals and books. Some one called him ‘The little friend of all the world.’ He had known

perhaps the best life could give when he fell in action at nineteen : and he is and will be ' Little Ivo,' most tenderly so named, to the men and women who knew him and rejoiced in him.

He had the literary temperament, and that with the soldier's is, I think, one of the finest blends humanity can produce. Between Philip Sidney and such as these there is only a gulf of centuries.

' The little friend of all the world.' The one who called Ivo that, told me also of a delightful evening in an Irish great house when Mr. George Wyndham, then Chief Secretary for Ireland and possessed with his dream of leaving Ireland contented—the one man who could have done it and passionately desired it—came to dinner. When he arrived, there was a group about the drawing-room fire listening to ' Kim ' being read aloud. George Wyndham took up the book which had been laid down and went on with the reading—read through the dressing-bell and the dinner-gong—read through the dinner-hour and beyond it—and only laid down the book when it was finished.

Ivo had a great love of his home and his own family. The Fitzgeralds thought ' The Good Family ' quite the best thing of its kind, as it was. That disarming family pride is to be found in the letters of Lord Edward's latest descendants. Of Ivo one writes :

' Young as he was, he seemed to have that magic sympathy that made all people claim him as their friend. He had a wide outlook, keen and varied interests, warm human sympathies, and nimble wit.'

He was quick-tempered and then heartbroken if he had hurt anyone. He had a passion for beauty. He was brave and clean. He was always bookish, and in his short days—the few years at Eton—he made friends of the bookish, but not only of them. He was very simple and un-selfconscious. His mother records that he was invaluable at school feasts, looking after the guests, playing with the children, and thoroughly enjoying himself.

He had a beautifully shaped head covered with golden hair : ' a yellow-hammer head,' as it was known in the family. Some affinity of his with birds perhaps suggested the comparison. His Eton master, Mr. Aymer Whitworth, wrote after he was killed : ' He had something akin to the birds he loved so much, spontaneous and untaught : he was quite unlike anyone else in the world.'

' He pleased his grandfather when he came as a baby to Gosford,' runs a tale of him, ' because when he saw the Roman Eagle at the

head of the great staircase, which usually frightens children, he put his arms round it and hugged it. His grandfather said: "That child will be a great man one day."

Like the birds he was shy, and had his secrets from all but those he loved best. When anyone succeeded in penetrating his shy mysteries they found it very well worth while.

His letters home are full of the animals. 'Give my love to the plush-noses,' he writes; the 'plush-noses' being the Chows who figured in his mother's fireside, bedside stories for her children as 'the plush-nosed people.' The Eton boy sends his love to 'Horace, bless him!' Horace being his pet mouse. He loved everything in fur and feathers.

I pass by his bookishness, a taste which he may have shared with many others. He had gone to Eton from Summerfields, Oxford, in 1910, with a King's Scholarship, coming out Eighth in the Scholarship Roll. The great old school had many things to delight him; but he was one of the rare boys—perhaps they are not so rare—to feel keenly the separation from his home and the beloved family, although the War found him keen almost to anguish to be gone. Some one has written: 'There are some children who belong to God. There are others who belong to God and their mother.' Ivo belonged to God and his mother.

Unexpectedly, I find that Mr. Aymer Whitworth speaks of 'his considerable physical strength and great courage, rather masked by his slow, loose carriage.' He had the dome-like forehead which reminded some one of Sir Walter Scott, and the fair beautiful skin flushed and paled with feeling. That he was delicate with this reserve of strength was perhaps something accidental, non-essential—which he would have grown out of. He had one or two operations—for appendicitis at one time—but he wrote of his sufferings with a truly Franciscan gaiety.

February 1915 found him frantic to be off. He had already walked into Chapel as a Sixth Form boy—a ceremony the significance of which old Etonians will understand—and his mother had not seen him as she longed to. He implored her to take it for granted and deliver him from the school routine so that he should rush on his glorious destiny.

'The well-known clock, striking as I arrived, threw me back to my past here, but just failed to catch me in the mood of Eton, with melancholy effect. These last few months here have been dead and listless. This place seems to be terribly irrelevant.'

This is Ivo in one of his moods, mad to be off to the War—a 'heart too full of heavenly haste.' The letter of colds and heats ends : 'I thought I'd better not take Horace from the Fish (i.e. his sister), though I miss him.'

At last he has escaped.

'Yesterday as I leant out of my window at night I heard the flooded river plashing over the playing-fields. I could have wept, but now I am glad to go. I go to Sheerness this afternoon.'

At Sheerness he joined his regiment, the K.R.R.C., but was no more happy than when he fretted at Eton.

'We have had such an appalling number of casualties and have sent out so many officers that I hardly like leaving. The Colonel told me that I should have just as good a chance of going out from the Grenadiers, and I don't think I should go out from here before October, but if I am not out in October from the Grenadiers I shall be miserable thinking I might have gone out from here before, but I suppose there is plenty of time as the War doesn't look like being over this year.'

There is the very mood and moodiness of a lover—of Glory, or his Country, of 'the bright face of Danger'—of Death, the little sister of St. Francis !

He did go to the Grenadiers, and they went out in September. When the summons came he rushed up to Scotland just for a few hours to see his home and his beloved family. On September 11, he left Charing Cross, and the letters which followed were gay and high-hearted to the end. His mother wrote : 'He must have enjoyed every moment of that brief campaign, and he died after *succeeding* in rallying his men.'

The letters have a surprising quality. At one moment he is describing the campaign for his sister, or some one else femininely ignorant, with a knowledge and a passion for things military which showed the born soldier. Again he is describing the things that happened, with a gay high-heartedness—the joy of one who is at last in the Great Adventure. He bubbles over with gaiety : then, again, comes something of a serious desire for a greater knowledge of his profession, not knowing that soon he was to master the greatest knowledge of all—how to die greatly.

He had been censoring the soldiers' letters :

'They have such wonderful conventions. There are two alternative ways of beginning—"Darling, just a line to answer

your welcome letter, hoping this will find you as well as it leaves me,"—or: "Just a line to say I am still in the pink"—(unless they've been properly bad, when they are "getting on famously now"). If it is to their sweetheart they ask her not to forget that there is some one somewhere in France, and they end up by reflecting that the best thing to do is to leave it to the One Above.'

This bit from Ivo reminds me of a correspondent of my own, a Tommy in an Irish regiment, who had been through the Retreat from Mons, Suvla and the subsequent Gallipoli Campaign, the Serbian Retreat, and had finally settled down at Salonika. He wrote: 'Have seen some fighting, but none at present.'

Now and again a phrase leaps at you out of Ivo's letters. He has been night-marching and enjoyed it very much:

'One's legs swung onward by the thousand singing men. As we got nearer the roads grew more and more congested, a seething mass of wounded men, great lorries lumbering by, limbers jolting on the paved road, *all the sweat of War behind the line*. As it grew darker and we went on, the guns became louder and the flashes more distinct. A blood-red sun low on the horizon looked out from the clouds, to retire before the brighter flashes of the guns. Now and then the black skeleton of a house stood out against the sky. The last street we passed through was ruined on one side: the wounded were laid out on stretchers on the other: troops everywhere with rifles and fixed bayonets, and hordes of German prisoners; beyond, horses and flickering fires, and always the jolting of the limbers on the paved road, and the soldiers telling their stories of the battle.'

Epic prose down to the beautiful concluding phrase.

Between these an intimate little picture of a dinner at an *estaminet* with "Bimbo's" (Edward Wyndham Tennant) Company, after which an adjournment to the local brewer's house, where Ivo sat and looked on while 'Bimbo' sang 'Watch Your Step' to the accompaniment of the brewer's daughter. A student of Lord Edward is reminded of those parties at Kildare Lodge, to which came Cummins the Apothecary, and the Butcher's daughters, all 'good democrates,' to dance with the Fitzgeralds. 'A charming evening,' says Ivo; 'but now all this has come to an end and we move to-morrow night.'

Here is a macabre little picture:

'In the graveyard here a tombstone and the vault below have

been laid open by a shell. The coffin lid has been torn off showing the skeleton of a man. A toad is sitting on his chest and little brown mice are playing about his bones. R.I.P. says the tombstone.'

'Darling . . . I have just got your letter which I adored. People at home in England are a great deal more real than this War, which seems weary of its own melodrama, but does not know how to give it up.'

'The noise of a machine-gun in the distance is the most sinister sound in the world, it is like the death rattle of a giant. A shell leaving the gun is an incomparably dreary sound, as though it loathed its mission.'

Ivo was killed by a machine-gun, enfilading the trench, on Sunday, October 17.

Of all the cloud of witnesses who testified to what Ivo was and might have been I take this little letter, written by Ivo Grenfell, a younger boy, who was with him at Eton :

'Ivo was always very dear and kind to me and I did admire him so very much. I remember at Summerfields when we were there together how kind he was to me when I was a much smaller boy than him and looked on him with great awe and admiration. He was so splendid, and made life seem so lovely and so truly worth living. Ivo had the truest courage, and he did long to go out to this War, and now he is in the most perfect happiness.'

This letter, I think, says with a perfect simplicity all that need be said.

Lord Elcho, who was in Egypt with his regiment, the Gloucestershire Hussars, wrote to his mother from Alexandria, October 26, a letter, part of which I am permitted to quote :

'Darling—I have absolutely nothing to say. When your own mother and brother are concerned it is futile to talk about sympathy, and one consolation for me is that, if *any* comfort is to be extracted, or if the best kind of thought is of any use—which of course it is—your soul is big enough, large enough, for that purpose. The mere thought of your tackling it strengthens me. That sounds selfish and detached, but I have faith in you. I suppose the misery of people like — breaks the shock. A woman with sympathy loses many sons before her own. If anything could dwarf one's own tragedy it is the agony of millions of others. But it doesn't

—it is the other way about—one's sluggish imagination is stimulated and one merely realises for the first time other people's miseries as well as one's own. The only sound thing is to hope the best for one's country and to expect absolutely nothing for one's self in the future. To write down everyone one loves as dead—and then if any of us are left we shall be surprised. To think of one's country's future and one's own happy past. The first is capable of vast improvement, and as for the second, . . . I couldn't have had more joy out of anything than I have from my family. I am glad we had that bit with Ivo at Hunstanton. I wish I had seen him as a Guardsman. Bless him! I am so awfully sorry for Papa who loved him. Tell him how much I feel for him. He must write his sons off and concentrate upon his grandchildren, which, thank God, exist. We move to Cairo in a few days and after the move I go out to Gallipoli. I should rather have stayed here on the chance of the Balkans as cavalry. Gallipoli is terribly dull.'

He stayed behind in Egypt when his regiment went to Gallipoli, being the officer told off to remain in Egypt in charge of the horses—it was necessary to have a responsible officer. This separation from his beloved regiment nearly broke his heart. He sailed later for Mudros, but returned, as the evacuation of Gallipoli was taking place when he arrived.

Lord Elcho, having been wounded that Easter Sunday at Katia, returned to the firing-line. 'How like Ego!' (his own childish name for himself, which was retained by his family and friends) wrote his Eton tutor—'m' Tutor.' 'It was just like Ego to insist on going back to the front line, probably without a word, just as a matter of course.'

He was one of the great losses not only to those who loved and knew him, but to the world, to England particularly, of the War. He had 'written himself off'—with such a high courage and abnegation that he must have smiled as he did it. Happily he left England—and perhaps Ireland—his sons. He had so much to leave: a beautiful and adored young wife with whom he was perfectly, radiantly happy; the two precious children, his own family, of whom he was so proud; friendship, honours, so many tasks to be done which his hand must let fall. Few deaths, even in this War which has taken and is taking the flower of the race, can have called forth more noble lamentations than were uttered and written for him. He had the most uncommon mental powers with a beautiful modesty and unselfishness. He was one of those rare souls who,

being formed to lead, are always willing to follow. I take a few phrases from a friend's letter which seem to express him :

'I can never forget the charm of his high diffident indifference, illustrated in little things as well as great. I have, for instance, seen many graceful losers at games but never anybody who achieved the infinitely more exacting rôle of felicitous winner so incomparably well. I feel, rather than picture, his passing without the remotest trace of self-consciousness.'

I place this first among my list of quotations chiefly for the phrase 'his high diffident indifference,' for it is the quality so many noticed in him.

Here is a portrait of him from the hand of one of the two women who knew him best :

'He was the most upright, sensitive, fastidious and chivalrous creature that ever lived. He had Lord Edward's eyes—a sort of bluey, hazelly, brown, greeny-grey, with long sweeping curling lashes, and thick black brows. His nose was rather high and finely chiselled, his cheeks lean and the finest skin; his profile more resembled the pictures of the Earl of Egremont, his great-great-grandfather, than Fitzgerald or Charteris. A firm well-moulded chin and a curious distinction about his whole bearing—grace of mien, with a beautiful smile and a great sense of humour—and that curious mixture of fierceness and tenderness that one finds in shy, strong, good men. A great sense of beauty, a great sense of duty, a very thoughtful and original mind and very just. When he *said* anything one knew he was right, and when he *did* anything it was sure to be well-done; but he held back and was often silent, and his qualities were not always visible to the ordinary world, though all who knew him loved, almost revered him. Had he lived to come home from the War he would have been so useful, and I feel he would have asserted himself. He was widely read and he thought deeply. Oh, what a rare creature! He, like Ivo, seemed to have come out of the heart of pure Romance.'

Epic prose again, or rather lyric prose, the song of the night-ingle crushing her breast upon a thorn.

I have before me some of Lord Elcho's letters written in Egypt, full of tenderness and of a high-hearted gaiety; but nothing will bear taking from its context, and there is only space for a few more testimonies.

'Very few people were like Ego in the War,' wrote a brother officer. 'Most of us waste so much time grumbling. He was

always calm and contented. He fell very splendidly doing *more* than his duty. That was like him. Ego with his fineness stood for a great deal in life to me.' 'He was a rare and beautiful being,' wrote Raymond Asquith—who was so soon to follow him—'one of the most fascinating companions a man could have or a woman either, with a charm so individual and uncommon that we cannot hope to see it repeated however long we live.' And 'One feels somehow less *safe* in the world without him,' wrote Raymond Asquith's sister.

'I don't know if you know how fond I was of Ego,' writes another young soldier. 'He was a great hero to me and infinitely attractive. I delighted in his perfect humour, his detachment, his independence, as well as his bent of mind and his scholarship. He never said anything silly or superfluous or meaningless—never (to me at least) anything that had not point and charm. No one in the world saw a joke against himself so well, even to the point of constantly making such. No one was ever better company or a more perfect host. His mind was to me a perfect example of what Henry James calls "fine," and to those who knew him it was strange but very characteristic that he did not have a startling career at Oxford. Competition did not interest him. I suppose it was a part of what I admired so intensely in him, his astonishing unselfishness. It is what I admire more than anything in the world and when I find it I bow down and worship it. It is impossible to conceive anyone more unworldly while intensely appreciating the world. I doubt if he ever wanted in his life anything for himself—but you.'

'Real detachment, utter unworldliness, complete and entire abstinence from elbowing,' writes the same young soldier of Lord Elcho. And one sees in him for one's self 'the lineaments of Gospel books.'

'The greatest of these is Charity.' 'Charity is patient, is kind, envieth not, is not puffed up.' 'Is not ambitious, seeketh not her own.' This is the gist of the high eulogiums passed by many, great and simple, upon Hugo Francis Charteris, Lord Elcho.

'No one came so near perfection. He gave every one strength who knew him,' writes another woman. 'His diffidence, often so whimsical, always so enchanting,' is another phrase that leaps from a letter. 'He was one of the very few who could have saved this poor country,' wrote a brilliant man of letters. 'When the War is over there will be so much to clear up, and who will clear it up?'

Doubtless Lord Elcho had his dream, for which he laid down his beautiful life. 'He stood for something very precious to me,' wrote Charles Lister of Julian Grenfell, 'for an England of my dreams made of honest, brave and tender men, and his life and death have surely done something towards the realisation of that dream.'

The words might have been written of Lord Elcho.

'I will not cease from mental fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.'

Surely their sacrifice has not been in vain, and once again the soul of the world may be saved in war that was lost in peace.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

VENICE IN WAR-TIME.

BY HORATIO F. BROWN.

UNTIL the advent of aircraft as weapons of war, Venice, like England, and for the same reason, its island position, had enjoyed almost complete immunity from bombardment. In the Middle Ages we hear of Pepin's attack (A.D. 809); the Carraresi, Lords of Padua, and the Genoese, in 1380, seized Chioggia and blockaded the lagoon; hostile cannon on the mainland could be heard in the city in 1509, when the armies of the League of Cambrai threatened the existence of the Republic; Austrian projectiles fell and did damage, especially to Tintoretto's ceiling of the Scuola di San Rocco, during the siege of 1848; but none of these attacks can be compared with the grave menace to the people, the place, and its treasures which threatens Venice in the present war.

You cannot be long in Venice without feeling that you are in the war-zone. The dominant noise is the purr of the motor-engine; all day long, from sunrise to sunset, the buzz never ceases, either on the water or in the air, from military motor-boats or flying-machines of various kinds—*Velivoli*, 'sail-flyers,' the poet d'Annunzio wishes to call them, but the word has not caught on with the people, at least, and they have reduced the troublesome *aeroplani* to the handy *réplani*, and that is what they are now called. Watch is kept, day and night, by sentinels posted on the higher roofs, who signal to each other every half-hour through a megaphone, *All' aria buona guardia*, 'Good watch aloft.' The threat of a raid is never absent, except in foul weather or on pitch-dark nights, for Venice lies so near the scene of action on the Carso, only sixty or seventy miles away, that she offers a tempting target for the wrath aroused by each new success of Italian arms. The city has been bombarded from the air twenty-one times since the war began. From May 24 to November 7, 1915, there were eight attacks, all of them, except two, by daylight, usually in the early hours of the morning; this year there have been thirteen, including a small affair on November 11, and there seems to have been a crescendo in their ferocity and in the size of the bombs. It is clear that some attempt has been made to aim at specific points—the station, the arsenal, the cotton-mill—except perhaps during the violent attack which followed the fall of Gorizia, when bombs were freely sprinkled

over the town ; but, in any case, the height at which the aeroplanes fly makes the incidence of the bombs a matter largely of chance. The raids were all carried out by aeroplanes, and lasted, on an average, about an hour. The warning of an impending raid is given, if in the daytime, by the long, melancholy wail of sirens, followed by three cannon-shots ; if after dark, by the extinction of the electric light as well. But, danger or no danger from the sky, the city is in continual darkness at night, save when there is moonlight ; and whoever has not seen Venice now by moonlight, with no artificial light to challenge and confuse the purity, strength, and efficacy of that burnished-silver sheen upon Istrian stone, the wonder of the city, the definition of all that is essential, the elimination of all that is trivial in its architecture reflected on the motionless mirror of silent canals, has not seen Venice at all ; has certainly not seen Venice as the old Venetians saw her. The silence in the *calles*, the stillness on the canals, is incredible ; only a rare footfall wakes an echo, not a gondola or a barchetta ruffles the satin surface of the water, whose colour is a dull jade with the reflections of houses thrown on it by a wash of black, through which the opaque green still makes itself felt ; only, if you halt on a bridge near a barrack, you will be brought back to reality and told at once to ' move on.' In the Piazza and on the Molo the moonlight lies in broader flakes, the assertion of contrast between light and shadow is less intense ; the great buildings look larger than by daylight and, if there be some autumnal mist in the air, the Campanile's angle is lost to sight, while away across the water S. Giorgio is a mere loom of buildings, and the Salute a ghostly vision of cupolas and towers.

Although great pains have been taken to prevent accidents by putting wooden barriers near the bridges where the pedestrian, on moonless nights, might miss the steps and walk into the canal, the number of deaths from drowning is said to have exceeded the slaughter by bombs. You are not supposed to be out of doors during an attack, and many of the larger and more substantial houses have been requisitioned as ' cities of refuge,' whose doors must be opened on the first alarm to receive the passers-by and the screaming crowd of women and children who flock to them from the flimsier dwellings of the poor. All this worry coupled with the absolute stagnation of the port and the business depending on it, the destruction of the cotton-mill by incendiary bombs, the absence of tourists and the closing of hotels, is naturally trying the people of Venice very severely—in fact, Venice is the one big city of Italy that feels the strain of war ; yet its inhabitants are coming now

to bear it admirably. They seem to have settled down to a semi-stoical acceptance of war and the consequences it entails in the war-zone, not without a sustaining pride in the thought that, whatever may be happening in other cities of Italy, they, at all events, know what sacrifices war implies, and are ready to face them. During a raid they are agitated of course—night attacks are peculiarly trying, and 'war babies' are not uncommon; but when the racket is over and the immediate danger past, there is enough of the old spirit—the *buonumore goldoniano* left to out with a jest and an invitation to drown the *paura* in *un'ombra di vin*. Apart from the nerve-racking experience of a bombardment by aeroplanes, the damage actually done has been comparatively slight when we recall the number and ferocity of the attacks. The city doubtless owes this good fortune to the fact that it stands in the lagoon, and is surrounded and intersected by water which renders bomb explosions relatively harmless. Nevertheless, up to the present time, many palaces and five churches have been injured, some of them irreparably. The Church of the Scalzi, or Barefooted Friars, near the railway station, has had an unfortunate history. During the siege in 1848 it was seriously damaged by round shot from Austrian batteries, and on the night of May 25 last year a bomb from an aeroplane destroyed the ceiling with Tiepolo's fresco representing the translation of the Casa Santa, and ruined the pavement and much of the marble decoration. On August 9 of last year an incendiary bomb fired and destroyed the roof of Santa Maria Formosa, the shrine of Palma's Sta. Barbara, which had, however, long been placed in safety. It has been the fashion to consider this church as of negligible interest architecturally, but the fire has revealed a building which possesses considerable beauty of design in the style of the Lombardi, recalling the abbey church of Praglia, in the Euganean Hills, or, more closely still, the Venetian Church of S. Salvatore, in its arrangement of shallow cupolas carried on slender pilasters forming the aisles. The way in which the central cupola has withstood the violence of the flames, and still rises erect on its graceful sustaining pilasters, bears speaking testimony to the ability of the master-builder. On the following night, August 10, 1916, an incendiary bomb fired and destroyed the lantern and damaged the cupola of S. Pietro in Castello. A month later, on September 12, at midnight, an explosive bomb pierced the southern clerestory wall of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, at the apex of one of the windows. It took a diagonal course across the church, burst in the air, and drove a

large hole in the opposite clerestory wall. The explosion stripped the interior of all its plaster, injured Piazzetta's ceiling, representing S. Dominic in glory, and blew out all the glass; fortunately the fine Vivarini window had been already removed. Perhaps the most violent explosion of all was caused by a bomb which fell outside the wall of the sacristy, near the foot of the Campanile at S. Francesco della Vigna. The bomb buried itself in the ground before exploding, hence the terrific force developed; it made a great crater, at least six feet deep and ten wide, now filled with water; it blew in the wall of the sacristy and cracked the foundations. Contemplating this havoc, and absent-mindedly wishing to say something to the dear old Padre who acted as guide, I asked 'And did it make a noise?' Far from resenting my fatuous question, he answered with a cheerful 'Heh! he-e-h!' which somehow seemed to sum up the general temper of Venice in war-time.

Apart from the damage actually done by bombs, there is the ever-present anxiety as to what they may yet do. The Palazzo Ducale and San Marco are in constant danger. On May 22 this year a violent explosion in the Calle delle Razze, near Danieli's Hotel, seemed to the watchers to have menaced the Palace; on September 4 an incendiary bomb fell only a few yards from the façade of the Basilica. Elaborate precautions have been and are being taken for the protection of the buildings, but the problem is no easy one; and it is deplorable that the necessary work on restoration has now to be suspended, and all the attention turned to protective devices, which, however carefully carried out, as they certainly are, cannot be of benefit, if they be not of actual detriment to the structures.

The fantastic design of the Ducal Palace—light colonnades on the ground- and first-floors, carrying a solid block of heavy masonry above—renders the building liable to irreparable damage should an angle-column, or indeed any column of the arcades be blown in. The angles have now been completely encased and buttressed in brick, and this fancy of the Italian architect, or the necessity of the problem, the need to enclose all the abundant and projecting sculpture of the angles, has given rise to several engaging episodes in the brickwork of these protective reinforcements. The Judgment Angle is now a round tower, with sloping escarpment; the Adam and Eve Angle a square tower, with angle-brackets; the Noah Angle a short, heavy, square tower with slanting roof; each arch of the lower arcade is supported by, and nearly filled in with, brickwork, strengthened at the key-stones by inner and outer

buttresses. The lighter arcade of the second-floor is fortified by heavy baulks of timber, condensed at the angles ; in short, it looks as though the whole palace were trying to turn itself into some mediæval fortress—the great Este Castle at Ferrara, for example. Inside, in the atrium leading from the Porta della Carta to the foot of the Giants' Staircase, the bronze horses of S. Marco are stabled and covered with sandbags, and so are Alberghetti's and Nicolo dei' Conti's bronze well-heads in the courtyard. Upstairs, in the great halls, not a painting has been left on wall or ceiling ; they have been rolled on huge wooden cylinders and stowed away in safety. One of the most impressive features of the Ducal Palace is the vast forest of woodwork which carries the roof ; and here lies the chief danger to which the monument is exposed : an incendiary bomb would set these great beams, now as dry as tinder, in a blaze. The curators have done all that is possible. The woodwork has been impregnated with a non-inflammable wash, sand has been stored and powerful hydrants led to the roof, which is guarded day and night. The danger, however, is undoubtedly great. Outside, on the sloping leads which offer so pleasant a foothold, and whence the view of Venice presents an unrivalled panorama of islands, lagoons, the distant sea, the clustered cupolas of San Marco near at hand, and every campanile in the city soaring into the blue, the traces of war are clearly to be seen in the small holes made by falling shrapnel bullets ; little round holes softly margined in the yielding metal, almost like a flesh wound.

In the Piazzetta, San Teodoro and the Lion, each on his pedestal, unprotected, seem to defy the foe and proudly guard the city. Let us hope no ill befall them. The Lion would be a grievous loss, but no doubt the sentiment of Venice would not like to see him taken down, and the chances of a direct hit are small.

The great Church of San Marco is now rapidly disappearing from sight behind ramparts of protection. The façade towards the Piazza, with its three noble portals, is completely masked up to the gallery, where the horses stood, by a huge double screen of timber, filled in with innumerable bags of sand. The outer face of this screen is protected against fire by slabs of *eternite*, and this screen will soon be extended to cover both the northern and southern façades. In the case of the church, as in the case of the palace, the gravest danger—the danger most difficult to meet—is the menace to the roof. If a bomb fell on any of the cupolas the outer shell of lead and woodwork must be demolished ; could the shallow, inner cupola of brick, which carries the mosaics, resist the impact ? and

if not, if a bomb pierced the cupola and exploded inside the church, the ruined plaster of SS. Giovanni e Paolo bears eloquent testimony to the fate in store for the mosaics. The genius who, humanly speaking, presides with loving care over the safety of the Basilica, has done all that anxious thought and affection could suggest. The interior of San Marco is disappearing from view no less surely and rapidly than the exterior. On sunless days the church is almost pitch-dark, and it is only gradually that the eye begins to distinguish the huge piles of sandbags that smother altar, ambo, pulpit, and font, the swaddled figures on the chancel screen, the muffled columns that seem dwarfed and shrunken and misshapen, and vaguely recall the proportions of some early Egyptian temple. The problem of preserving the mosaics in case of an internal explosion presents great difficulties, and is capable of merely tentative solution. So far two steps have been taken : it is proposed to spread a sheet of thick cloth all over the mosaics at a distance of about five or six inches from their surface, thus forming a cushion of air which, it is hoped, will modify the violence of an explosion and the dangerous effects of the displacement of air. Further, all the glass windows of the cupolas have been removed and, during an attack, windows and doors are left open to diminish the shock of concussion. But in order to prevent rain from entering the building, the place of the glass windows has been taken by screens of coarse, brownish sail-cloth, stretched on iron frames with hinges which readily fall outwards. The effect on the interior of the church is most surprising. The light coming through these screens, especially on a sunny day, is of a soft, diffused yellow, a little brighter, perhaps, than the light transmitted through the alabaster windows of such a church as S. Antimo in Tuscany. This warm, glowing light exactly hits the key of the mosaics, which catch it, reflect it, are illuminated by it, till they reveal all the richness of their oriental splendour. The elongated, Byzantine figures of the central dome, the ultramarine saints of the southern, every design and legend on the blazing background, speak out and are intelligible ; each cupola glitters like an inverted saucer full of molten gold, flooded and shimmering with radiant light. It is a revelation of the mosaics of San Marco ; never have they been seen like this before. But we may hope that, when the war is over, and if Saint Mark's survives, the secret of lighting the cupolas, thus accidentally discovered, may be adopted permanently, and so confirm the old Italian saw that '*non tutti i mali vengono per nuocere.*'

THE OLD CONTEMPTIBLES: A RAID.

BY BOYD CABLE.

FOR several days our artillery had been bombarding stretches of the front German trenches and cutting the wire entanglements out in front of them. The point actually selected for the raid was treated exactly the same as a score of other points up and down the line. By day the guns poured a torrent of shrapnel on the barbed wire, tearing it to pieces, uprooting the stakes, cutting wide swathes through it. Because the opposing lines were fairly close together, our shells, in order to burst accurately amongst and close over the wire, had to skim close over our own parapet, and all day long the forward officers crouched in the front trench, observing and correcting the fall of their shells that shrieked close over them with an appalling rush of savage sound. And while they busied themselves on the wire, the howitzers and heavier guns methodically pounded the front line trench, the support and communication trenches, and the ground behind them. At night the tempest might slacken at intervals, but it never actually ceased. The guns, carefully laid on 'registered' lines and ranges during the day, continued to shoot with absolute accuracy during the darkness—although perhaps 'darkness' is a misleading term where the No Man's Land glowed with light and flickered with dancing shadows from the stream of flares that tossed constantly into the air, soaring and floating, sinking and falling in balls of vivid light. If no lights were flung up for a period from the German line, our front line fired Verey pistol lights, swept the opposing trench and wire with gusts of shrapnel and a spattering hail of machine-gun bullets to prevent any attempt on the enemy's part to creep out and repair their shattered defences.

Our bombardment had not been carried out unmolested. The German gunners 'crumped' the front and support lines steadily and systematically, searched the ground behind, and sought to silence the destroying guns by careful 'counter-battery' work. But all their efforts could not give pause to our artillery, much less silence it, and the bombardment raged on by day and night for miles up and down the line. It was necessary to spread the damage, because only by doing so, only by threatening a score of

points, was it possible to mislead the enemy and prevent them calculating where the actual raid was to be made.

The hour chosen for the raid was just about dusk. There was no extra-special preparation immediately before it. The guns continued to pour in their fire, speeding it up a little, perhaps, but no more than they had done a score of times in the past twenty-four hours. The infantry clambered out of their trench and filed out through the narrow openings in their own wire entanglements, with the shells rushing and crashing over them so close that instinctively they crouched low to give them clearance. Out in front, and a hundred yards away, the ground was hidden and indistinct under the pall of smoke that curled and eddied from the bursting shrapnel, only lit by sharp, quick-vanishing glare after glare as the shells burst. In the trench the infantry had just left, a forward officer peered out over the parapet, fingered his trench telephone, glanced at the watch on his wrist, spoke an occasional word to his battery checking the flying seconds, and timing the exact moment to 'lift.'

Out in front a faint whistle cut across the roar of fire. 'They're off,' said the forward officer into his 'phone, and a moment later a distinct change in the note of sound of the overhead shells told that the fire had lifted, that the shells were passing higher above his head, to fall farther back in the enemy trenches and leave clear the stretch into which the infantry would soon be pushing.

For a minute or two there was no change in the sound of battle. The thunder of the guns continued steadily, a burst of rifle or machine-gun fire crackled spasmodically. Over the open No Man's Land the infantry pressed rapidly as the broken ground would allow, pressed on in silence, crouching and dodging over and amongst the shell holes and craters. Four German 'crumps' roared down and past, bursting with shattering roars behind them. A group of light 'Whizz-bang' shells rushed and smashed overhead, and somewhere out on the flank an enemy machine-gun burst into a rapid stutter of fire, and its bullets sang whistling and whipping about the advancing line. Men gulped in their throats or drew long breaths of apprehension that this was the beginning of discovery of their presence in the open, the first of the storm they knew would quickly follow. But there were no more shells for the moment, and the rattle of machine-gun fire diminished and the bullets piped thinner and more distant as the gun muzzle swept round. The infantry hurried on, thankful for every yard made in safety, knowing

that every such yard improved their chance of reaching the opposing trench, of the raid being successfully accomplished.

Now they were half-way across, and still they were undiscovered. But of a sudden a rifle spat fire through the curling smoke; a machine-gun whirled, stopped, broke out again in rapid and prolonged fire. From somewhere close behind the German line a rocket soared high and burst in a shower of sparks. There was a pause while the advancing men hurried on, stumbling forward in silence. Another rocket leaped, and before its sparks broke downward the German guns burst into a deluge of fire. They swept not only the open ground and trenches where the raiders were attacking, but far up and down the line. Rocket after rocket whizzed up, and to right and left the guns answered with a fire barrage on the British front trench and open ground.

But at the attacking point the infantry were almost across when the storm burst, and the shells for the most part struck down harmlessly behind them. The men were into the fragments of broken wire, and the shattered parapet loomed up under their hands a minute after the first shell burst. Up to this they had advanced in silence, but now they gave tongue and with wild yells leaped at the low parapet, scrambled over and down into the trench. Behind them a few forms twisted and sprawled on the broken ground, but they were no sooner down than running stretcher-bearers pounced on them, lifted and bore them back to the shelter of their own lines. The men with the stretchers paid no more heed to the pattering shrapnel, the rush and crack of the shells, the hiss and whistle of bullets, than if these things had been merely a summer shower of rain.

In the German trench the raiders worked and fought at desperate speed, but smoothly and on what was clearly a settled and rehearsed plan. There were few Germans to be seen and most of these crouched dazed and helpless, with hands over their heads. They were promptly seized, bundled over the parapet, and told by word or gesture to be off. They waited for no second bidding, but ran with heads stooped and hands above their heads straight to the British line, one or two men doubling after them as guards. Some of the prisoners were struck down by their own guns' shell-fire, and these were just as promptly grabbed by the stretcher-bearers and hurried in under cover. Where any Germans clung to their weapons and attempted to resist the raiders, they were shot down or rushed with the bayonet. Little parties of British sought the

communication ways leading back to the support trenches, forced a way down, hurling grenades over as they advanced, halted at suitable spots, and, pulling down sandbags or anything available to block the way, took their stand and beat back with showers of bombs any appearance of a rush to oust them. Up and down the selected area of front-line trench the raiders spread rapidly. There were several dug-outs under the parapet, and from some of these grey-coated figures crawled with their hands up on the first summons to surrender. These too were bundled over the parapet. If a shot came from the black mouth of the dug-out in answer to the call to surrender, it was promptly bombed. At either end of the area of front line marked out as the limits of the raid, strong parties made a block and beat off the feeble attacks that were made on them. There was little rifle or bayonet work. Bombs played the principal part, and the trench shook to their rapid re-echoing clashes, flamed and flared to their bursts of fire, while overhead the British shells still rushed and dropped a roaring barrage of fire beyond the raided area.

In five minutes all sign of resistance had been stamped out, except at one of the communication-way entrances and at one end of the blocked front line. At both of these points the counter-attack was growing stronger and more pressing. At the communication trench it was beaten back by sheer weight of bombing, but at the trench end, where heavy shells had smashed in the walls, and so rendered the fighting less confined to a direct attack, the defenders of the point were assailed from the German second line, man after man fell fighting fiercely, and there looked to be a danger of the whole trench being flooded by the counter-attack. The prompt action of a young officer saved the situation. It had been no plan of the raid to touch the support or second trench, but, ignoring this understanding, the officer gathered a handful of men, climbed from the front trench, and dashed across the open to the second one. His party pelted the counter-attackers massing there with as many bombs as they could fling in a few seconds, turned and scrambled back to the front line, and fell into the scuffle raging there in a vigorous butt-and-bayonet onslaught.

But now it was time to go. The object of the raid had been carried out, and it was risking all for nothing to wait a moment longer. The word was passed, and half the men climbed out and ran for their own line. A minute later the remainder followed them, carrying the last of their wounded. An officer and two or three

men left last, after touching off the fusees connected up with charges placed in the first instance in their duly selected places.

A moment later, with a muffled report, a broad sheet of fire flamed upward from the trench. Three other explosions followed on the heels of the first, and a shower of earth and stones fell rattling about the ground and on the shrapnel-helmets of the retiring raiders, and the earth shuddered under their feet. The German gunners slackened and ceased their fire, probably waiting to hear from the front what this new development meant, or merely checking instinctively at the sight and sound. For a moment the shells ceased to crash over the open ground, the raiders took advantage of the pause, and with a rush were back and over their own parapet again.

Over their heads the British shells still poured shrieking and crashing without pause as they had done throughout.

In military phraseology the raid had been entirely successful, a score of prisoners being taken, a stretch of trench completely destroyed, and few casualties sustained. The raiders themselves summed it up in words more terse but meaning the same—'a good bag, and cheap at the price.'

HOW CARLETON SAVED CANADA (1775-6).

BY A. G. BRADLEY.

GUY CARLETON, like Wellington, Wolseley, Wolfe, Roberts and many other famous soldiers, came of that stock which Irish patriots have for all time denounced as an alien garrison, reserving always the right to acclaim as fellow-countrymen any of its members who rise to military distinction in the service of England. Carleton's forebears came out of Cumberland at the time of the Ulster Plantation. He himself was born in 1724, the son of a squire in Co. Down, and at eighteen was commissioned ensign in the 25th Foot. At twenty-seven he was still a lieutenant (in the Foot Guards), while his friend Wolfe was a captain at twenty. In 1752, however, Wolfe, having declined the office of military preceptor to the young Duke of Richmond on an educational tour among the fortifications of the Continent, not feeling fully qualified, recommended Carleton, a high compliment under the circumstances. This gave the latter his opening, and by 1757 he was commanding the 72nd Regiment, with some reputation for ability. In 1758 both Amherst and Wolfe applied for his services in the forthcoming expedition against Louisbourg. But the King interfered, owing to some disparaging remarks of Carleton's on the Hanoverian troops which had reached his ears, and sent him instead to Prince Ferdinand's army on the Continent. In the next year, when Wolfe was preparing for his Quebec campaign, he again submitted Carleton's name in his list. But the King, still nursing his petty grudge, passed his pen through it. Wolfe was furious, and this time would not be denied. Pitt sympathised with him, and sent Ligonier, then Commander-in-Chief, to remonstrate with His Majesty, who continued, however, to be obdurate. So did Wolfe, who declared it to be monstrous that a general confronted by a great and difficult adventure should not be allowed to select his own assistants. An *impasse* threatened; but on a third appeal the old King reluctantly gave way.

Carleton's knowledge of fortification, Wolfe being short of qualified engineers, seems chiefly to have accounted for this insistence. He did good service throughout the siege, and was slightly wounded in the final battle on the Plains of Abraham. After

serving with credit till the peace (1763) in Cuba and elsewhere, and being twice wounded, he returned to Canada in 1768 as General Sir Guy Carleton and Governor of the Colony, in succession to Murray, who had ruled it discreetly since the conquest. For twelve troublous years Carleton governed the new French subjects, and after an interval of eight more was to come back as Lord Dorchester for another term almost as long and, politically, still more critical. He remains by far the most outstanding British official in Canadian history; and through the eighty years preceding responsible government, when Governor-Generals really mattered, is accounted the greatest among them. During his first term he had to assist in creating, and himself to inaugurate, a formulated system of government for the new Colony, then wholly French but for a handful of British, mainly American merchants and the like, settled since the conquest in Quebec and Montreal, who caused trouble quite disproportionate to their numbers. Above all, it fell to Carleton to defend the colony against the American insurgents, who were not merely anxious to win over the Canadians but still more to prevent Canada from becoming a base for British operations against themselves. It is with the most critical incident of this perilous year that I now propose to deal, and in so doing to remind the reader that Canada in all likelihood owes its present existence within the Empire to a soldier whose name is virtually forgotten in his own country.

Now from the Peace of 1763 to the 'Quebec Act' of 1774 Canada was administered generously and with little friction by a Governor and council—which last included men of both races: a period none too long for testing the unfamiliar material we had to deal with before codifying the method of its future government. For here was a country alien in thought, blood, speech and faith, and further complicated by the presence of a handful of British Americans, who had come in with the conquest and demanded as ultra-Protestant democrats the extreme civic privileges of a conquering race: in other words, the virtual suppression of the French and all their usages, popular government excluding Catholics, and the non-interference of the British Government who, with British soldiers, had done the conquering! The conditions of Canada were peculiar. Of its 90,000 souls the bulk were illiterate, superstitious, but well-to-do peasants of seventeenth-century French origin, profoundly ignorant of political ethics and indifferent to anything but interference with such immemorial customs as they

approved of. There were less than a hundred seigneurs holding by quaint semi-feudal tenure the whole occupied country. Mostly poor, often illiterate, their class may have totalled a thousand souls, while the bourgeoisie, artisans, nuns and priests amounted perhaps to thrice this number. Besides a few officials and soldiers were some 2000 British at Quebec and Montreal, a majority of whom were of the trader class above alluded to. Lastly, a swarm of lawless *coureurs de bois* attached to the inland fur trade, with some partially civilised Indians and half-breeds, completes the picture.

No measure of British rule had so far disturbed the placid lives of the peasantry. They were in docile subjection, moreover, to their Ultramontane church, which was grateful and loyal to its new rulers. The wounded military pride of the higher laity had been greatly ameliorated by friendly social intercourse with the British garrisons, who understood and respected their bravery in the late war. The contented indifference of the inarticulate masses was taken for granted not merely by their British rulers, but by the French gentry and priests who knew them so intimately. But now an unpleasant surprise was sprung upon all of them, which came near losing Canada to the British Empire.

The Quebec Act of 1774 did little more than codify the previous usage which had followed, so far as possible, the promises made to the French at the conquest and set up a form of Crown colony Government unnecessary to elaborate here. With a higher class opposed to democratic innovations, and an illiterate proletariat utterly indifferent to political ethics, anything else for the present was unthinkable. It maintained the established Catholic church and the system of land-tenure on which all set store, introducing only the English criminal law, a rather popular change than otherwise. But some years of contentious discussion both in England and Canada preceded the Act, during part of which Carleton's presence in London was required, thereby removing for a time his watchful eye from the colony. But when it actually passed, a tremendous uproar was raised, not in England nor yet by the French Canadians but by the already disaffected American colonists, and loudly echoed by their merchant friends in Quebec and Montreal. These generous and politic concessions made to the 'new subjects' formed one of the grievances tabulated by the American patriots against the tyrannical Mother Country. That Catholics should be thus considered instead of belabouring them into Protestants shocked

the New England conscience. That an archaic land system should be left to those who preferred it struck the individualistic New England backwoodsman as almost an outrage on himself. The thousand or two not altogether very reputable Canadian British had demanded, among other things, a popular chamber with an exclusive Protestant franchise—a tenfold caricature of St. Stephen's Green—and intrigued with the Americans to defeat the Act. Agents disguised as pedlars and the like now stealthily traversed the Canadian parishes poisoning the plastic minds of the *habitants* with preposterous versions of the Government's intentions. Every concession made from the best of motives was skilfully prevented to a sinister design on their liberties. These artless rustics were as wax in the hands of the sharp unscrupulous Yankees who passed from farm to farm, and whose employers would have given church, language, and every other cherished usage of the French Canadian short shrift had the opportunity ever arisen. Space forbids any elaboration here of this secret propaganda. It is enough that suspicion of their seigneurs and, for the only time in Canadian history, distrust of their priests was successfully implanted. The old French militia system had been retained for defensive purposes. But this was a mere blind, the peasants were told, for transplanting them to European battlefields! When the revolutionary war broke out the parishes already sown with this poisonous seed were placarded with appeals to the French to join 'their brothers in the fight for freedom.' Carleton's unavoidable absence had favoured the American efforts. He had always the welfare of the French population keenly at heart, and their general esteem for him was not lessened by the fact of his young wife having been partly brought up at the French Court. He knew enough, however, to be anxious, and with the American clouds gathering had implored the Government for troops. But the latter, characteristically affecting greater knowledge than 'the man on the spot,' referred him to the paper strength of the French militia, 'who it was confident would prove loyal.' This force amounted nominally to about 20,000 men, according to the official estimates of the day. Probably even a willing muster would not have produced half that number. But that would have been more than enough.

So when in 1775 the American Revolutionists seized the Canadian southern outposts, and later on burst upon Montreal in force, the militia, with trifling exceptions, refused to budge. Neither their officers, their priests, nor Carleton himself could stir them. Most of

the population to the south of the river proved to be in open sympathy with the invaders, while as many as the latter could arm, to the number of several hundred, actually joined them. Roughly speaking, Quebec and Montreal, nearly two hundred miles apart, stood for the eastern and western limits respectively of inhabited Canada, and the old war route coming north from the American colonies struck the St. Lawrence near Montreal. All Carleton's regulars, numbering less than a thousand, with some French gentlemen volunteers, had been hurried forward to the forts of St. John's and Chambly on the Richelieu which protected it. In October these were reduced and captured, with their garrisons and stores, by the American forces under Montgomery. Montreal now lay at the latter's mercy. A battalion of half-hearted, inefficient militia was practically all the force at Carleton's disposal for defending a virtually open city, and the whole open frontier south of the St. Lawrence from thence to the Quebec districts. The latter city, being presumably in no immediate danger, had been left in charge of Carleton's lieutenant, Cramahê, a capable Anglo-Swiss officer. Carleton himself was facing the much more desperate situation at Montreal.

A brief experience of outpost skirmishing with his militia, and of the disaffection of the British-American element, convinced him that at Quebec only could Canada be saved. In the meantime the sole communication, in other words the St. Lawrence, between the two cities was being threatened. So on November 10, with a few score followers, Carleton sailed eastward, but only to find himself at Sorrel confronted by American batteries, and rendered yet more helpless by a sudden failure of the wind. That Carleton should get through was vital. The capture of the others was of no relative consequence, and in any case was now unavoidable. By good luck the services of a notable Canadian *voyageur* known as 'The Wild Pigeon' were secured. So, disguised as a peasant in the Frenchman's canoe, paddled with silent blades and sometimes by the bare hand through the dark of the night, and with many risks, Carleton ran the dangerous zone, and at the head of Lake St. Peter boarded a sloop which a few days later landed him safely at Quebec. He was not a moment too soon, and an unpleasant surprise awaited him. For young Benedict Arnold, with 700 picked men, had just arrived on the south bank of the St. Lawrence, opposite the city. They were the remnant of a force of nearly twice that number which five weeks previously had left New England on a northward

march through the shaggy and then trackless Border wilderness to surprise Quebec. It was a bold performance. Storm and flood battered them. Starvation at one time stared them in the face. Many died, and hundreds turned back beaten and exhausted by the struggle. But the indefatigable Arnold and his tough majority were already reinvigorated by the flesh-pots of the obsequious Canadian settlements, and were awaiting the main body of the Americans under Montgomery, whose road to Quebec now lay absolutely open.

In Quebec alone was now centred all that remained of British authority, and on Carleton the hopes of its loyal element, whose strength no one could yet rightly estimate, were concentrated. Cramah  declared that the enemies within the city were more dangerous than those without. In the meantime he had done what he could to patch up the walls and make good other defects. Relief might be expected in the following May, when navigation opened. Till then the city would be completely isolated amid a vast and frozen world. It was sufficiently provisioned and moderately armed, but would have to fight outside for much of its firewood, an article as indispensable as food in that climate. Carleton would harbour no traitors. He ordered every man who was not prepared to fight for the city to get out of it with his belongings in forty-eight hours—a procedure which reduced the population to some 5000 souls. Of these were mustered about 500 French and 300 British militia volunteers eligible for active service. To the former were added a few hundred young students and elderly men for relief duties, and to the latter some 300 sailors from merchant ships and small war vessels detained for the purpose in the harbour. There were also a few artillerymen, with other regulars, and several capable officers both British and French. Whether the whole of this small motley force, about 1700 in all, were filled at the first mustering with loyal ardour is more than doubtful. But we have ample testimony that in a very short time Carleton had inspired them with it to a man. And these Americans opposed to them were assuredly no riff-raff. They were picked men, many of them veterans of the Seven Years' War and all full of ardour in their cause. No others would have traversed the Kennebec wilderness or have endured the hardships of a winter investment of Quebec. They were of very different spirit from the infinitely more numerous hordes that four decades later were flung for three successive years upon Canada under political generals and

left off at the end of it all still upon their own side of the boundary.

Montgomery, now in chief command, was probably no more a high-souled patriot than a 'disgruntled' British officer, though both characters have been freely assigned him. An Anglo-Irishman like Carleton, and son of a Donegal squire, he had served with credit in the British army, but retired from pique, as was commonly said, at some official slight. Having settled in New York and married into its leading Whig family, that of Livingstone, he early espoused the patriot cause, was sent to Congress, and as an experienced soldier eventually given the command against Canada. About forty years of age, handsome, and of engaging personality, Montgomery's many soldierly qualities were marred by a singular weakness for bombastic utterance and a rather theatrical temperament.

The Americans regarded the capture of Quebec as a moral certainty. Both sides well knew that with the fortress city unconquered and open to the first British fleet, the occupation of the rest of Canada was of slight significance. So here in early winter lay these two small opposing forces of untrained or half-trained soldiers, the one within, the other without, the now rapidly freezing city, prepared to decide in all human probability the future destiny of an embryo nation.

Montgomery at once summoned Carleton to surrender, and in terms that Napoleon might have used to a Prussian fortress after Jena. Carleton, regarding him in the light of a renegade British officer, vouchsafed no answer. Nor was a written address to the citizens shot into the town on arrows calculated to win popular sympathy seeing that they were invoked as 'a wretched garrison of slaves defending wretched works.' A lurid forecast too was drawn of 'a city in flames, carnage, confusion, plunder all caused by a General courting their ruin to avoid his own shame.' Some readers will need reminding that the citadel and upper town of Quebec stand on the point of a long lofty ridge dominating the angle formed by the junction of the St. Charles River with the St. Lawrence, while the lower town, some 300 feet below, lies upon the flat fringing both rivers. The western or landward side of the city, alone vulnerable to the Americans, was defended by walls terminating at each river-side extremity in a stockade. Montgomery with his own division took post about the St. Foy road, on the high plateau stretching westward from the walls of the upper town,

otherwise the ever-famous Plains of Abraham, where clusters of houses and barns afforded some shelter from the inclement weather. Arnold and his men occupied the suburb of St. Roche, near the St. Charles approach to the lower town, which included the large general hospital and the Intendant's Palace of the Old French régime. On Montgomery's immediate right, dropped sheer down those brushy cliffs up which Wolfe had climbed in 1759, and below them the St. Lawrence was rapidly freezing up into its wintry rigours. The weather was already bitter and the ground frozen tight. Trenching was scarcely possible. But Montgomery gave out that he would 'eat his Christmas dinner in Quebec or Hades.' He ate it, as it so turned out, in neither of these places, but at his headquarters at Holland House; and it was his last, poor fellow! For his guns proved disappointing, and he failed in every effort to breach the walls, while those of Carleton's were of heavier calibre and better served, and put the American batteries out of action almost as fast as they were mounted. Montgomery had left part of his force at Montreal and part at Three Rivers, as reserves to be drawn upon when needed. He had for the moment probably some 2000 men all told before Quebec, besides the corps of French-Canadian rebels, and about half of the former were clad in British uniforms from the recently captured forts. A well-provided country lay behind him to the westward, well pleased for the moment with the refreshing shower of American silver that was sprinkling it. Arnold's better protected guns and mortars from the suburb of St. Roche threw shot and shell continuously into the city, while 500 sharpshooters, mainly from the Virginia mountains and accustomed to Indian fighting, found a mark in any head that showed above the ramparts.

Carleton had need of all his energy and resource. His chief danger lay in the extent of the defences in proportion to the small number of the defenders, and they moreover so raw! Colonel Voyer was put in charge of the French volunteers, Colonel Caldwell, a retired officer living in Quebec, of the British, while Colonel MacLean, a Highlander, acted as second-in-command to Carleton. A speedy assault on the city, for obvious reasons, was taken for granted. Every man and every company were quickly allotted their specific duties, and when off them lay by their arms. Carleton spent night after night in his clothes. 'His confident bearing,' writes a soldier diarist, 'gave courage to every one. The lately apathetic French and in part grumbling British were seized with a

new spirit and vied with one another in learning and executing their new duties and in eagerness for the expected attack.' From December 22 to 30 an assault, and with good reason, was daily expected. But stormy weather and hesitating councils made for delay. In brief, Montgomery's confidence, though not his courage, had waned something with his failure to breach the walls. His officers, however, were urgent, so on the 30th, the weather moderating, the order to assault was given.

The plan of action comprised a feint by Americans and French Canadian rebels against the walls on the high Plains of Abraham, while simultaneous attacks were made at the two low extremities of the city, where narrow entries by the St. Lawrence and St. Charles respectively were defended by wooden barriers. Montgomery was to lead the first; Arnold, with the larger force from St. Roche, the second. Having forced their respective ways into the lower town from opposite angles, a combined attack was to be made upon the upper town, and with every hope of success.

About four in the morning of the 31st the sentries in Quebec saw two rockets shoot up into the sky, which from bright starlight was now overclouding behind a veil of falling snow driven on a bitter north-east wind. Already in a measure warned, the signal left the garrison no room for doubt. The drums beat to arms, and in about five minutes every man was at his post. Montgomery, in the meantime, with some 300 men, had dropped down by Wolfe's cave to beat his laborious way against wind and snow along the rough ice-littered river-shore beneath the cliffs. It was blind and slippery going over these two miles to the narrow gut leading into the city between the rocky steep of Cape Diamond and the frozen water's edge. The street end, the *Près-de-ville*, was here closed with wooden barriers, at which a battery of two guns, commanded by a ship's captain, and fifteen sailors, stood on guard, while just above was a block-house filled with Canadian riflemen. The incident of Montgomery's death has been idealised almost out of recognition by American writers and artists. It was brief enough, in all truth, and must be told still more briefly here. The rebel General, with about a dozen companions, was, it seems, slightly in advance of his long tail of followers, when he found himself suddenly in the presence of the barrier. The men at the guns at the same moment saw several shadowy figures loom dimly out of the darkness, one of which seemed to spring towards them. Matches were applied, and two rounds of grape in quick succession swept the approach,

followed by some rifle shots from the block-house above. That was, in fact, the beginning and end of the whole business, and nothing more was seen by the defenders at this quarter, for the column behind retired precipitately upon its tracks, convinced that the enterprise was too desperate for ordinary mortals. One of them who has left an account of the siege, interesting but only moderately convincing, describes Montgomery as leaping forward from the advanced group, sword in hand, and calling out 'Come on, brave boys: Quebec is ours,' the moment before the guns were fired. Next morning a fatigue party sent out by Carleton to the *Près-de-ville* found thirteen bodies close together—those, in short, of the whole advanced group seen by the gunners, buried beneath new-fallen snow. A single stark hand alone protruded, and the hand was Montgomery's!

Arnold, in the meantime, at the further end of the city was leading something under a thousand men from the suburb of St. Roche against the barricaded entry to the street under the *Sault-au-matelot*, which then filled the gap between the foot of the steep and the St. Charles River. A surprise was out of the question, for the bells in the city were clanging wildly into the night, and the sound of musketry from the feigned attack upon the western walls was already adding to the uproar. Buffeted by a driving snow-storm, encumbered with scaling-ladders, and exposed by fire-balls thrown from above as they passed under the Palace Gate and the *Hôtel Dieu*, the Americans suffered considerably from a well-sustained fire from the ramparts. Arnold, leading his men, was wounded at this juncture and put out of action, upon which Morgan the frontiersman assumed command, and at the head of his Virginia riflemen carried the outer barrier after a brief resistance. At the further end of the narrow street, however, were more barricades blocking any further way to both lower and upper town. Here and in the street itself and round about it a long and tough struggle ensued, in which about two-thirds of the garrison were probably engaged. The Americans suffered out of all proportion to the British from a galling fire kept up from the houses in the street and the buildings above, while many of the former were several times taken and retaken at the point of the bayonet or with clubbed muskets. The confusion was greatly increased by the British uniforms worn by the enemy, for the motto 'Liberty or death' pinned on their hats was of small service in distinguishing friend from foe in such a *mêlée*, aggravated as was this one by the darkness

and falling snow. Carleton now sent out a small company with two guns and some bluejackets from the Palace Gate to take the enemy in the rear. They routed a reserve company and carried away the guns from a battery at St. Roche. Then, heading back, they closed in on Morgan's men, already hard pressed and disheartened by the non-appearance of Montgomery, and completed their discomfiture. It had been a long and tough fight, for the short winter day was already breaking when the surviving Americans, some four hundred in number, surrendered. As many more were either killed or wounded, or had escaped over the frozen surface of the St. Charles. Carleton paraded the prisoners, gave them breakfast, and secured them in the Seminary and the Recollets. The exultant garrison, whose loss had been slight, begged to be led out at once against the enemy; but Carleton was too old a soldier to be pushed into adventures in the open with raw troops, now the sole hope of Canada. His business was to hold Quebec till the expected British force arrived in the spring. He buried Montgomery under the St. Louis bastion, being present himself at the ceremony, and a tablet recently erected, with Government permission, by Americans commemorates his rather dramatic death—a concession characteristically British and slightly paradoxical!

The real crisis was now over, though the besieged had no grounds whatever for such belief beyond an exultant faith in their own powers of accomplishment. For the Americans pushed up fresh reinforcements and guns under General Wooster and stuck to the city with wonderful pertinacity for the next four months, bombarding it continually, though never attempting another serious assault. The fickle *habitants*, too, began to tire of their new friends when American silver gave place to paper money. Franklin and other leading patriots came in council to Montreal, but were not greatly cheered by the prospect. But they were determined to persevere, and towards the close of winter had some 4000 men in Canada. The season was unusually severe and the snow exceptionally deep, while smallpox—even to-day a popular epidemic among French Canadians—took heavy toll of the besiegers, without much inconveniencing the besieged. Still it was a wearisome and anxious time for the latter, kept constantly on the alert, and cut off from all news but sinister rumours from the south of fresh activities against them, till relief from overseas might be looked for. The private journals, of which there are several, breathe

infinite reliance on the valour of the garrison and the leadership of Carleton, with a burning desire to 'get at' the enemy. 'His looks (Carleton's) were watched and gave courage to many. He will find a numerous band to follow him in every danger.' In April greater activity among the Americans encouraged the prisoners in Quebec to an attempt for liberty, but it was suppressed, and the men were removed to hulks in the harbour. At the first melting of the ice, too, a fire-ship was sent down against the British vessels, but miscarried.

But even the relief of the city in the spring seemed no certainty to Carleton. In the course of months Ministerial plans may well have changed. So it was a memorable May morning that brought excited crowds to the ramparts at the news that a sail was in sight. It proved to be the frigate *Surprise*, soon followed by two more ships bringing infantry and marines, and above all the grateful news that a large armament was following. It was all up now with the Americans, and Carleton felt justified in giving full rein to the long-pent-up ardour of his faithful garrison. Stiffened with troops from the ships, it was an eager and gallant little army he led out in person on to the old battle-ground behind the city on May 6. 'The drums beat to arms,' says an elated diarist, 'and it was ordered that all volunteers in the English and French militia should join the sailors and troops to march out and attack the rebels. Every man was eager to offer his service.' General Thomas, who had succeeded Wooster, made no attempt to check Carleton. There was a general stampede. From Lévis on the south shore, from the suburb of St. Roche, from the encampment on the Plains, all was hurried flight. Nine hundred Pennsylvanians, mainly Scotch-Irish backwoodsmen, took ambush for a time, but soon joined the rout. 'Muskets, ammunition, clothes, bread, pork, all lay in heaps in the roadway with howitzers and field pieces. Look which way soever, one could see men flying and carts driving away with all possible speed.' Cannon balls were sent bowling after the fugitives in sheer exuberance, but there was no sustained pursuit. Hopes of a compromise with the American colonies were by no means yet abandoned, and Carleton for one, was still reluctant to shed more colonial blood than necessary.

By night all was over. Every American had vanished and peace brooded once more over the faithful city and its rejoicing

garrison. Thus ended the last and fourth¹ siege of Quebec, a critical episode in Imperial history, concerning which our standard classics, as in the case of the U.E. loyalists and of the brave defence of Canada in 1812-15, have observed a fairly unanimous attitude of absent-mindedness. For with the speedy arrival of the British and Hessian regiments that were later on to compose the luckless army of Burgoyne, the expulsion of the enemy from Canadian soil was a short and simple matter. Nor was Canada again seriously threatened during the war. It was an ill-timed bit of personal spite that caused Germaine a year later to substitute Burgoyne for the sagacious and experienced Carleton as commander of the northern force. There would have been no Saratoga, that is tolerably certain, and it was Saratoga that brought in the French who turned the fortunes of the war. No small relief was felt by the forward party among the Americans when Carleton was superseded. It was not merely his military qualities and local experience they held in respect, but they felt a real anxiety lest his well-known humane and considerate attitude towards what he still regarded as his misguided fellow-subjects in America might weaken the resolution of such districts as he should happen to invade.

Never in all its history had Quebec been so thronged or so gay as through the year 1776 when that British army which was afterwards lost at Saratoga made its headquarters in Canada. Under the stimulating influence of abundant markets, high prices and British gold, the *habitant* repented him of his past errors and returned to the fold of orthodoxy, nominally represented by King George but actually by his priest, which happily was the same thing. To do that picturesque and conservative agriculturist justice, he never again to an extent worth mentioning allowed himself to be beguiled out of the comfortable existence guaranteed him under a beneficent and tolerant British rule.

In the war of 1812-15, though never an ardent militiaman from love of martial exercise, he submitted cheerfully to the limited enrolment that the course of that war called for in the Lower Province, and on the few occasions when opportunity offered displayed both zeal and valour in its defence.

¹ 1690: Abortive attack by British and American colonists under Phipps. 1759: Capture by Wolfe. 1759-60: Defence by Murray against Lévis.

A ROUTE REPORT.

BY SIR J. GEORGE SCOTT, K.C.I.E.

THE Great War has proved to be a mixture of science and pure elemental savagery. The Germans have been thinking it over for a generation, and they worked the problem out with the assistance of professors, engineer experts, war-game students and simple bullocky fighting men. It was planned with all the patience and skill of bacillus culture. There was nothing of *bushido* about it. *Kultur* is the antithesis of *bushido*. There were expounders of the art of war who told us that no modern conflict could last long. The weapons of destruction had been so perfected that flesh and blood must give way early, or be annihilated. The apostles of *Kultur* pondered over this, and the result has proved that they studied the subject to some purpose.

The War was begun with the mad-bull charge of the typical savage, a Zulu impi, or a horde of Huns, supported by a cloud of field and machine guns, and a total disregard for all the laws of war and of Geneva. It was a bitter disappointment that this did not succeed, but the ferocious professors had anticipated the possibility of it, and to the ordinary expedients of trenches and redoubts they added scientific elaborations, on modern lines, of ancient weapons of destruction, and so, added to guns which fire at targets which they cannot see, eight and more miles away, we have catapults, balistae, mortars, *Balearica tormenta*, Greek fire and poisoning of the air and the water, all on the most erudite and fiendish lines.

The mere soldiers at the same time carried out enveloping tactics which have extended across an entire continent, and yet have failed to bring about a conclusion. There is a most extraordinary combination and blending of the old and the new, and the duration of the War seems to be likely to be extended rather than reduced by the deadliness of the weapons used, because the defensive is so much more powerful than the offensive. The High General Staff was confident that the first wild rush would hew and hack its way through to Paris, just as the stone avalanches of the Abors swept everything in front of them. It had been calculated, and pondered over, and even rehearsed at *Kaiser Manöver* until it seemed a certainty. But it was met and baffled by an enemy

that the professors thought decadent and contemptible, and the *paradeschritt* captains held to be mere amateurs. The wholly unorthodox and unexpected raid of clouds of Cossacks into East Prussia was also most disconcerting to the plan. But the blood-thirsty professors and the scientific ghouls were merely annoyed. They are nothing if not thorough, and they fell back on their subsidiary schemes based on antiquarian researches and laboratory war-learning. They had at any rate occupied great stretches of enemy country, and they proceeded to settle down in this and dig themselves in, with a confident hope that their enemies would wear themselves out in impatient endeavours to break through. Our war experts for months told us that a war of attrition was the proper thing under the circumstances, and the Boche war students grinned expectantly as they thought of all the devilish inventions and revivals they had ready to ensure that the attrition should not all be on one side.

They established a war front where you can walk along a drain for a matter of three weeks or a month without seeing anything but chalk soils, and clay soils, and drift soils, and a variety of other soils, and there they prepared their archaic devilries as new-fangled aids to victory. The result has been deadly, but it has also been disappointing. We have got back to Homeric dialogues where the combatants, only a few paces apart, hurl chaff and abuse at one another in regular Dark Ages fashion.

The War is still the greatest war that has ever been, but there are plenty of cases where it is reduced to something not unlike single combat. We hear of a subaltern or a non-com. holding or taking a vital point with sheer audacity and two or three men. Our men have learnt that in the East, in little wars such as the German soldier has no experience of, and the learned professors have not thought worth reading about. It is quite unorthodox and so irregular that it is most disconcerting to those who have come to look upon the *Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege* as the German Bible. On more than one occasion it has saved a position when everything seemed to be lost. Though the Great War occupies all the students of tactics and strategy throughout the world it still remains very much of a subalterns' war, and our men have graduated in that against enemies not so disciplined but quite as brutal as the Boches.

Craigo was out on a route march with ten Lancers. The troop-horses had to be exercised, and he was instructed at the same time

to do a route-traverse. A country the size of England was being annexed and there were not nearly enough men to do it. Moreover, the whole country was a military obstacle. There was no transport except carts drawn by bullocks. The carts were like the Horse Artillery. They could go anywhere across country where a man could go, but they were terribly slow about it, and everything had to be strapped in like an airman who contemplates fancy flying. Roads did not exist anywhere except as a figure of speech and on maps drawn up by the Intelligence Department. They were drawn up on information supplied by travellers in search of cutch, or possible teak-forests, or by casual orchid-collectors. To these were added the route marches given by zealous missionaries. As charts they were not much better than the efforts of pithecoïd cave-men. Moreover, they were very fragmentary. The orchid-hunters had an incurable tendency to zigzag about like dragon-flies, or ships trying to baffle a U-boat, and their versions of the names of places were written down according to what they would have called rational spelling, but too frequently suggested the ears of a hippopotamus. The missionaries, with their knowledge of the vernacular, had naturally a much better idea of the village names, but they had a professional tendency to sow seed by the wayside, and their estimates of distance suffered accordingly. Moreover, the information they gave to the Intelligence Officer was much more connected with the character of the reception they had met with than with the size and resources of the places they had been to. It was fairly clear that the political views and general tendencies of a village could not reasonably be determined from their readiness or otherwise to listen to sermons and read tracts.

The only other source of information was a Government High School educated interpreter, who at any rate started with a zeal which was a long way in front of his discretion. He made industrious inquiries for hours on end and tabulated the inhabitants of the various neighbouring centres as :

1. Good.
2. Wicked.
3. Wealthy but good.
4. Wicked and wealthy.

He complicated the possible value of his information, however, by sending in amended tables at a few days' interval, without keeping copies of his earlier reports. Consequently a man who was

good one day might figure as wicked and wealthy a week later. Moreover, the estimates of distance were very elastic.

After a few efforts, which had drawn down upon him the exceedingly frank criticisms of irate Tommies, who had resented the lengthening out in fact of a supposed ten-mile march over dusty roads into one of seventeen, the latter part of it in a broiling sun, he began to develop caution and added warning notes in brackets after this fashion :

‘Distance estimated : eleven miles [informant lean, suspicious character].’

‘Distance about nine miles [informant worthy man, mostly accustomed to ride on pony].’ Or simply :

‘Authority : market girl [free and easy, but strapping].’ Or :

‘Authority : matron [fat and sulky, and not likely to go in anything but bullock cart].’

The Intelligence Officer was untiring in his collection of routes, but the O.C. was not satisfied with any of them. The only road he knew was the one the column had marched in by. It was styled a main road, but it would have scandalised the most bovine farm labourer if he had been required to cart turnips over it.

The garrison of the station consisted of a native regiment, a wing of a British regiment, a troop of Lancers, with a British subaltern in command, and a section of a mountain battery, also with only one white officer. The O.C. had strict orders on no account to undertake expeditions any farther than made it certain that the column would get back the same day. Therefore when a ten-mile march lengthened itself out to seventeen the criticisms were stormy and universal, and expressed in the first words that came to hand.

So it came about that the Lancers were freely used to check the information given, and the officer was required to make flying surveys and reports in all directions. Craigo detested the work, and did not need the reminders which were constantly showered on him that he was not good at it. Three days a week of what he called spy-work seemed to him intolerable. Moreover, he was persuaded that it led to nothing, and therefore he very soon began to take his angles without halting or dismounting, and trusted freely to his ‘eye for country’ and to the pace which he considered to be normal with his charger.

There was a big village away to the west which had a bad reputation. It figured at the top of the Interpreter’s list with a large number of ‘wicked and wealthy.’ All the cattle from the

loyal population near the post were supposed to be carried off there, and whenever there was an attack on the station mail-runners, it was put down to this village. The distance was certainly more than twelve miles, and was estimated at anything up to twice that distance.

Craigo had been out that way before, and had submitted sketches which the O.C. and the I.O. had received with remarks which left no margin of doubt as to what they thought of them. But he had no ambition to check the work, if it was going to prevent him from getting all the way to the village or near enough to locate it, so as soon as he got out of sight of the station he put his men to the trot to get over the seven or eight miles which he considered quite well enough mapped for any reasonable infantry.

The road was called a cart-road, and carts had evidently gone over it, for it consisted mainly of wheel ruts, some of them eighteen inches deep. Between the ruts there ran a narrow footpath where the country people walked and polished the ground smooth with their bare feet. There were practically no villages, and on either side there was nothing but thin scrub jungle, tightly packed clumps of male bamboo, thorn bushes and stunted trees, which left a reasonable amount of room to walk about, but made it quite impossible to see more than a few yards in any direction. Here and there were wide, sandy water-courses, which never had any water in them except after heavy rain. One of the objections to Craigo's route-sketch had been that there was nothing to show whether this was one channel meandering through the flat country, or several different torrent-beds, but he considered that this was a question which could best be solved by flanking parties for themselves, or by the eventual Survey of India man.

Anyhow, he trotted on till he had got to the end of his former traverse. The road here followed the sandy bed for some hundred yards, and as a concession to orders he slowed down to a walk and began his route-sketch. It was rather more of a freehand drawing than ever, but he passed that over with the reflection that he would be able to check it on the way back. It was very monotonous work, for even he, on his big Waler, was not able to see over the twenty-foot-high scrub which came right up to the road.

About three miles or so on, just as they had got to the edge of the irrepressible sand-bed, there were two sudden bangs from the far side of the nullah, and Craigo's horse collapsed below him. At the same time there was an exclamation from one of the leading sowars. Craigo disentangled himself from his charger and hurriedly

ordered the *sowars* to dismount and line the bank. Nothing more, however, happened, and after Craigo had ascertained that the *sowar* had no more than a flesh-wound in the thigh, which he bandaged up, he announced that he was going on to search the far side of the nullah both up and down. It was not cavalry work, he said, but he was not going to have his charger killed for nothing. The native officer protested violently; it was not mounted men's work, and if anything happened he could not go back to the camp without being eternally disgraced. There were two old *shikaris* among the *Risala*, and they and he himself were the men to do the work. Craigo had to admit that scouting with troop horses in the jungle was not according to regulations, so the *Risaldar* and three *sowars* dismounted and crossed over and disappeared in the bush.

There was dead silence for a matter of twenty minutes, and then the *Risaldar* came back with a broad grin on his face. 'We saw no *budzats*, *Bahadur*,' he said, 'but about half a *kos*, or may be less, on, there is fine *maidan*, wide, open, galloping country, and on the far side of it there is a clump of toddy palms. Where there are toddy palms there must be a village. That is no doubt the village which the Presence wishes to visit. But we saw and heard nobody.'

'No doubt that is the infernal place. From all accounts the village has a bad conscience, and the men that fired on us were look-outs posted to give warning. We'll look them up, eh, *Risaldar-sahib*? That will give the Colonel *Sahib* some real information, much better than a mere road-map. We'll just ride over and get an idea of what size the place is and whether they are game to fight. I'll take the wounded man's horse, but what are we to do with him?'

'We can mount him behind another *sowar*, and he and another can ride back slowly towards the station, *sahib*. We cannot leave him here, for the *budmashes* might be hiding near and fall upon him. Two of the *sowars* have "cast" horses, *Fakira* and another. He can ride behind *Fakira*, and the other can go for safety's sake.'

'Yes, that's the idea,' said Craigo as he swung himself into the saddle. 'It will cheer up the horses to have a bit of a gallop.'

They found that there was no road on the other side of the sandy channel, but they were able to worm their way between the clumps of jungle and soon formed up on the edge of the rice-fields beyond. The paddy plain was a huge wide oval, and through the heat haze they were able to see a couple of miles or so off the clean-

cut dark line of the toddy palms. The side nearest to them was hard and bare and sun-cracked, for it was towards the end of the hot weather, and there was nothing to break the flat expanse but the mud ridges between the rice-plots, scorched as hard as fire-bricks. On the far side, however, there was a glimmer of green which seemed to show that the water had been turned on to irrigate the land in preparation for the sowing. They started off at a gentle canter, keeping a sharp eye to the edge of the jungle to the right and left, as well as to the front. Craigo led them straight for the toddy palms, but they had not got half-way across when the *Risaldar* drew up to his shoulder and said: '*Bahadur*, I humbly suggest that we should right incline. I see the shimmer of water ahead. It might founder the horses and would assuredly spoil a charge. Moreover, the *tari* palms stand close together. They are good cover for *sipahis*, but they are troublesome for *sowar-lôg*. We should get all jammed together, or all separated, and we could not use our lances as we should like to. On the right there seems to be a temple. If it is a temple, there will be open ground there and more freedom for a *tamasha*.'

'Right you are, *Risaldar-sahib*,' said Craigo. 'I expect we shall find the main village road there too. There are not enough of us to take any chances and go fooling about searching for it. We'll slow a bit to give them a chance to show up. Tro-o-ot.'

In a few minutes they could see a funnel-shaped opening among the trees, and got a glimpse of some house roofs behind among the foliage. They were less than five hundred yards off now, and Craigo was just going to say everybody had bolted 'as usual' when there was a ragged volley. This was either intended as a warning, or the aim was very bad, for there was no buzz of the round bullet, which makes so much more noise than the ping of the rifle shot.

Craigo turned in his saddle: 'Ho! Ho! We'll have some fun after all. We'll go slap through the village to see what size it is. Follow me and don't scatter. Stick every one with a gun and nobody else. Keep after me and don't go down side lanes if there are any. We'll clear them afterwards, if it seems worth it. Charge!'

There were some log barricades and bamboo hurdle fences near the pagoda, but the *sowars* swooped down upon them so furiously that only about half a dozen of the dacoits stayed to defend them. The rest bolted, most of them for a lane to the left-hand side of the pagoda enclosure. Craigo cut down two as he cleared the

hurdles, and the rest were speared. They tore down the lane like a whirlwind, laying out men at every few yards, but the bulk of the dacoits escaped down narrow footpaths or through the enclosures round houses. Inside a minute the party found themselves at the far side of the village, with a shallow sheet of water in front of them and a line of jungle on the far side.

They reined in and wheeled to the right, and then found that the real main street of the village had been missed. The mouth of it had been covered by a log palisade on the far side. Craigo turned up it without a moment's hesitating and trotted back with scores of ducks and fowls flying before him, and an astonishing clamour of pigs and pariah dogs.

Half-way down they came upon a white-haired old man kneeling in the middle of the road, with a lacquer dish full of plantains and three or four servants behind with their faces an inch off the ground and their hands, palms together, held over their heads.

Craigo pulled up to question him, but the *Risaldar*, with the wariness of greater experience, said in a rapid undertone: 'It is too cramped here, *huzūr*. There may be *budmashes* in the houses. Better talk to him at the pagoda. The two rear *sowars* will bring the *buda* (old man) along.'

It was only a hundred yards or so on, and when they got there *sowars* were posted to keep a look-out on all the approaches. Craigo made a note of it with a grin, and then, with the assistance of a polyglot *sowar*, began to question the old man.

He proved to be the headman of the village, and volubly declared that he had nothing to do with the evil men who had fired on the protector of the poor. He made a great point of the fact that he was the hereditary holder of the dignity. There had been five generations before him to his certain personal knowledge, and everyone knew that there were five before that, and five before that again. But unfortunately within the last few months an ill-conditioned, bloody-minded man, with a rabble rout of blackguards behind him, had come to the neighbourhood. He was a man of no family and no home, and his followers were the veriest wastrels, but he claimed to have a patent from the Lord of the Celestial Elephant and the Magic Weapons, assigning to him the village and all the circles round about. That was absurd, for a remote ancestor of the headman had founded the pagoda, and every succeeding member of the family had added to its shrines and image-houses, as the gallant English Lord could see for himself. But what could he do? The

robber band was very numerous, and they had many guns and no principles of any kind. So they took what food they wanted and carried off anything that took their fancy. They harried the country for miles round, and stole cattle and all the money and goods of the poor villagers, for no one was strong enough to resist them. They had even brought disgrace on the village by putting up the stockades and defences for the purpose of drawing off attention from their own lair, and it was marauders from this gang who had come to demand rice, whom the noble War-Lord had put away.

Craig, who had been listening impatiently, now abruptly broke in to ask where this dacoit leader was, and the old man replied with a wave of his hand in the direction from which Craig and his party had come. They lived, he said, in a jungle camp, a couple of gunshots off the road, and there were many hundreds of them.

Craig whistled softly to himself. He wondered what had become of the wounded man and the two *sowars* he had sent back. For a moment he thought of having a slap at the camp, but with only seven troopers and in a jungly country it seemed a trifle reckless. If there were any casualties—besides it was getting on in the day and there were those three *sowars*. So he contented himself with telling the headman that the governing of the country was no business of his. The headman must come in to see the Civil Officer and give him proofs of his innocence and all the information possible that would lead to the extermination of the gang. The old man said he would have come long ago, but for the fear that the dacoits would have caught and murdered him on the way and then have burnt the village. Even if he had got through, he could not have come back again without troops to back him. A better plan would be for the noble War-Lord to stay and garrison the village. He would supply him with all the food he wanted, and would post men to report the movements of the robber-gang.

Craig smiled at the idea of occupying places on his own account, but it did not seem diplomatic to say why it could not be done, and it did not occur to him to say anything else. He had at any rate fixed the position of the suspected village. So he swung himself on his horse to go. The *Risaldar*, however, interposed again: 'Huzūr,' he said, 'there are the guns of the *budmashes* whom we have settled. Assuredly they are not of great worth, but it were better if we should destroy them. We cannot carry them away,

and the old *buda* and his men cannot keep them if the *budzat-lôj* should return, as most assuredly they will.'

'You're quite right, *Risaldar-sahib*. They're only old Tower muskets, but they might kill somebody else's charger. We'll go round the way we came and smash them. Get them by the butt-end and strike the muzzles on the ground. They're probably loaded.'

They walked their horses round and got eight or ten. The stocks broke quite easily. The guns probably dated from Waterloo days, and they flung the ammunition into the lake. When they got back to the green round the pagoda they found a man mounted on a pony and a cluster of excited villagers round the headman.

'We have heard the sound of firing,' he said. 'The dacoits are probably preparing to ambush the noble War-Lord. Your war-lordship and his horse-fighters came across the paddy-fields. The hell-cats are lying in wait on the edge of the jungle. They will be carefully hidden. Therefore it is better your war-lordship should take this guide. He will show you the royal road to the north.'

Craigo hesitated. It was a temptation to go straight for the gang and smash through them, but if he had any casualties there would be no way of getting them off. On the other hand, he had no assurance that he was not being led into a trap. Just then there was the far-off sound of a gunshot. It was obviously not the crack of a rifle, but the plop of a smooth-bore with a round bullet and native powder.

'By Jove,' he exclaimed, 'I believe they are after the two *sowars* with the wounded man.' He turned on the headman. 'We'll take your guide, but if he leads us into mischief I'll shoot him on the spot,' and he showed his revolver.

'He is my own son. You may trust him as you trust me,' replied the old man.

The *Risaldar* slipped a rope through the guide's bridle, and with Craigo on the other side of him they set off. The pace was set by the guide's pony, which was old and could not be persuaded to do anything but amble, but he ambled fairly fast. The youth explained that he had a pony which would have left them all behind on the horizon, but the caterans had taken it. He hoped the War-Lord would make a point of getting it back for him.

The road they followed skirted inside the jungle round the paddy-fields on the far side from that which the headman had

pointed out as the dacoits' camp. It was evidently a main cart-road, but just because it was that they had to fall into single line every now and then on account of the ruts. The guide's pony showed wonderful dexterity over them, based on a lifelong acquaintance, and he needed it, for the *Risaldar* kept a tight hand on the rope and a wary eye on the country ahead, which did not make matters any easier.

Suddenly they came to a sandy nullah-bed, and down this the guide turned at right angles. Half a mile or so on they came upon the dead body of Craigo's charger, lying half on the sand and half on the slope down.

'The guide's all right,' said Craigo, and at the same time he turned to look in the direction from which the shots had been fired, over an hour before. The sandy stream-bed had deadened the sound of the country-breds' hoofs, and except for the tossing of a head, or the champ of a bit, there was no noise. The guide suddenly put his hand up in warning and pointed down the road towards the station. There was an unmistakable sound of voices.

Craigo did not hesitate for an instant. His *sh-h* silenced some *sowars* who were going to announce, in the loud tones usual with open-air people, that they heard what everybody else did. He put his horse up the bank to the point where the path entered the nullah and drew his sword. He had already regretted having left his pig-sticking spear behind, and he made a mental note never to do so again, no matter how it might interfere with the taking of angles for route-sketches.

There was just room before a bend in the road for the *sowars* to bunch behind him. After a rapid glance to see that they were all ready, he raised his sword and charged, without uttering a word. The road was not straight for twenty paces at a time. It meandered about to avoid stumps of trees and clumps of bamboo. The dacoits must have heard them coming, but they were not quick enough to prepare for defence. When Craigo flashed upon them a few shots were fired, but most of the men scattered off into the jungle. Half a score or more, however, were too late.

The guide was wild with excitement. He had cut down somebody with his *dha* and wanted to wheel back to polish off the rest, when they pulled up a couple of hundred yards on, but neither Craigo nor the *Risaldar* was at all inclined to risk getting the troopers scattered and lost in the jungle, by pursuit in the scrub. They halted for a minute to see whether the dacoits were going to

rally and show fight. But there were no signs of it. The native officer suggested that it might be well to find out the exact number of the casualties. The 'commanding sahib' would want to know, he said. It was the sort of thing 'commanding sahibs' always did want to know. It was fairly clear that the native officer did not contemplate first aid, and he was in fact quite as bloodthirsty as the guide, though neither of them had ever heard the theory of frightfulness as it is set forth in *Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*, the German soldier's Bible. The notion of finding out whether the men were all 'quite dead' did not at all appeal to Craigo. Moreover, he was not a little anxious about the wounded *sowar* and the men with him.

So after waiting some minutes, until it was quite certain that the enemy had had enough of it, he decided to return to the station, with all the regular text-book precautions. After they had gone half a mile he thanked the guide and suggested that he should go home again by some safe route. But the young man refused with great promptitude. Some of the dacoits, he maintained, were certain to have recognised him, and it would be impossible for him to go back to his village again until the Royal Government took possession of it. He even suggested that the safety of his father depended upon the Royal Government occupying the village that very night. He was so voluble on this point that Craigo broke into a trot, and a little later into a canter.

Four miles from the station they came upon the three *sowars* dismounted and waiting in an open space. They were experienced fighters and had a very shrewd conviction that they might be stalked, so they had made the best use of their time till they came to a place where they could not easily be surprised and there they had waited patiently so that the whole party could return in good order. They had neither seen nor heard anything of the scouting party that was after them, and were by no means grateful at being saved from an attack.

The party got back to the station about four in the afternoon, and Craigo immediately went to make his report to the O.C. That officer was not at all pleased. 'I sent you out to make a road report and you go conducting warlike operations for your own amusement. You've probably spoilt all chance of our making a bag at that village. I have been in correspondence about it with the General commanding the Brigade for weeks. It is most selfish of you, besides being very irregular. You will have to give me a

written report of the affair—not now—to-morrow will do. And now let me see your road report and traverse.'

Craig looked rather blank. 'Well, sir, I'm afraid I've lost the sketching block. I had it strapped to my bridle wrist and it's gone. I suppose it came off when I got that toss. I clean forgot all about it till you mentioned it. When we were fired at and my horse was killed, I thought it was due to the regiment to hit back, so——'

'Quite right, my boy. Very proper spirit. But that did not justify you in going miles on to attack a village which, according to your own account, doesn't seem to have had anything to do with it. Supposing you had all been wiped out, as you certainly ought to have been, with cavalry in a close country and village lanes, I should have been obliged to move out to-night—or whenever I happened to hear of it—to hit back, as you call it. Well, what's the distance of this village of yours? You can tell me that, I suppose.'

'I should estimate it at between thirteen and fourteen miles, sir. I can't be quite certain. We had to break the pace and I quite forgot to time the movements. I should say it is not more than fourteen miles.'

'Fourteen miles! That's a nice distance for a night march over the abominations they are pleased to call roads in this country—and a nice hot one in the day-time! Any streams on the road?'

'No, sir. No water till you are right at the village—the far side of the village. There is good cover right up to the western side, the other side from this. It would be possible to make a surprise attack on——'

'That will do, Craig. You're too fond of attacking. You look a bit dusty. Go and have a wash and some food, and then let me have your report as soon as you can. I'd better have it to-night, so as to send a wire to headquarters.'

'What orders are there about the guide, sir? He says he dare not go back.'

'Hand him over to the interpreter, and tell the interpreter to take him to the Intelligence Officer, and to look after him after the I.O. has done with him.'

Craig saluted and went out.

'Smart boy that,' said the O.C. to his Staff Officer; 'wastes no time about making up his mind. But I had to sit upon him. He's

spoil all our chances of having a scrap. I expect the whole gang will shift their quarters.'

Two days afterwards a strong force set out. The Brigadier had sent orders by semagram (half telegraph wire, half helio) that the village should be attacked, and the gang dispersed, if arrangements could be made to return the same day. There was reason to fear that the headman of the village might be ill-treated, and it was desirable to create a feeling of confidence in all those who trusted in British protection. But it must be a one-day affair.

They started at midnight. There were two mountain guns on mules, a troop of Lancers, some twenty or thirty mounted infantry, a company of Tommies, and a double company of sepoys. The headman of the village had arrived late in the afternoon of the second day. After Craigo left he had come to the conclusion that the village was no place for him. So he and his household had cleared out into the jungle that night, and came into the station by a circuitous route next day. He undertook to guide the infantry round the flank of the village, while his son, now better mounted, led the mounted men to the dacoits' camp in the jungle. The two parties separated some way short of the nullah where Craigo had been attacked. The infantry were to have half an hour's start. It was then not far off dawn, and the strictest silence was ordered.

The infantry tip-toed off, but they had not been gone ten minutes when two warning shots were fired. It was evident that a surprise was no longer possible, so the mounted party started at once, galloping where it was possible and worming their way through the scattered jungle in an effort to keep line. The guide rode his hardest along a narrow forest path and was followed by the mounted infantry.

In a very short time they came upon the camp. It was a long, narrow clearing, with a trickle of a stream in the middle and tall forest trees all round with heavy undergrowth. There were rows and rows of bamboo and grass lean-to shelters, but they were all empty. The guide hitched his bridle over one of the posts and stirred up the wood ashes of an open-air camp cooking place. The embers were still glowing. The interpreter who had come with them remarked: 'They have cleared off, bags and baggages.' The guide wanted to go in pursuit away to the left, where, he pointed out, the tracks led, but the officer in command had imperative orders that 'after taking the camp' he was to bear over to the village to pick off any who might retreat from there. He set out to do

this, but when they got to the edge of the paddy-fields there was nobody to be seen, and they halted to await the attack of the infantry. After a considerable time they saw a line of skirmishers breaking their way through the village fence. There had been no fight there either. The effort at envelopment had been as ineffective as any of von Hindenburg's or von Mackensen's.

The dacoits had carried off all the rice and everything else that was portable from the village the day before, so the inhabitants said, when a few of them came in while the force was having breakfast.

The expedition made a hot afternoon march back to the station, and everyone joined in abusing Craigo as a selfish beast, who had spoilt a promising 'show.' There were none of them who had not had disappointments of the kind before, but there was a unanimous opinion that Craigo must not be allowed to spoil sport by going out to do any more route traverses. He almost wished he had been good enough at it to make himself indispensable.

TOM BOILMAN.

I.

THE house of Doctor Stephen Causton stood in the main street of Nether Mallow. It was a charming Georgian house in a charming thoroughfare lined with Georgian houses, and there was a row of pollard lime-trees in front of it. There had been a time when handsome red and yellow coaches, the Clarion and Speedwell and Lightning, used to come trumpeting past the house and pull up beneath the huge sign of the Duke of Ormonde, that the passengers might enjoy the excellent ordinary provided there; for Nether Mallow is on the Salisbury and Bledcaster road. But those days were long past; and now, in place of the coaches, there came tearing through the village self-propelled abominations which smelt and banged and hooted and very seldom stopped before the inn. Either their inmates had dined in Salisbury, or they were going to dine in Bledcaster; or, perhaps, not having dined at Bledcaster, they purposed dining at Salisbury. These infuriate machines, in any case, tore up the road, killed hens and sometimes dogs, and in the summer raised clouds of dust about which Doctor Causton and other conservative inhabitants of Nether Mallow complained bitterly—so bitterly, indeed, that at length the rural district authorities conjured up a *posse* of evil-looking ruffians to smother the village road in tar.

These people arrived in Nether Mallow one July morning. They brought with them horrible black instruments in which they boiled the tar—tubs on wheels, exuding nauseous fumes from imperfectly fitting lids, dripping blackness down their sides, and surmounted by chimneys that vomited a peculiarly filthy smoke. The operators themselves stood around brandishing jet-black ladles, like fiends from the Pit disguised as members of the Independent Labour Party. And as their devilry led them nearer to the house of Doctor Causton, that gentleman found himself obliged to close every one of his front windows, to exclude, in so far as exclusion was possible, the poisonous smoke and the odour of creosote. He inquired many times, of any one who cared to listen, whether there was a single place left in England where a man could live in peace.

On one of these desecrated afternoons the Doctor had returned

from a round of visits and gone up to his bedroom to wash, when his maid came to him with news of an urgent case just arrived.

'It's Mr. Harry Allether, sir. Pyeman and Mr. Kiss have just carried him in. He had a fit in the road, so they say.'

Doctor Causton wiped his face hurriedly and imperfectly, and went down to his consulting-room. There he found Harry Allweather inanimate on the couch, and anxiously regarded by Constable Kiss and Pyeman the carrier. The former had been seeking with a moistened finger the first-aid instructions in his blue note-book. It was believed in the village that the constable's unjudicial name had soured his whole life, to say nothing of deterring him from matrimony; and custom had never staled the joy found by the local wits in the alliterative injunction to 'Kiss the Constable!' addressed to any member of the other sex who happened to be passing him.

'It was this a-way, sir,' he explained to Doctor Causton, who was examining the sufferer. 'E come round the caarner from the Barshackle road, just where me an' Pyeman was standing, by one o' they caaldron things they're seething pitch in, an' 'e caaled out "Oh, Lard, have mercy!"—just like that—an' flop 'e went down in the drain. 'Tis strange, the way these fits take 'em. I caal to mind I had an uncle——'

But Doctor Causton, to whom it was apparent that Harry Allweather was not suffering from epilepsy, but had only fainted, interrupted the reminiscences of Constable Kiss, and sent him and the carrier on their way. They had not left the house before the patient gave signs of returning consciousness. He opened his eyes and muttered a little; but his first coherent words, uttered with every accent of extreme terror, had no obvious bearing on his seizure.

'The pitch!' he cried. 'The pitch!' And then, in a scream, 'Take it away! For God's sake, take it away!'

'It's all right,' said Doctor Causton. 'They'll take it away soon. Lie still for a bit, Allweather.'

Harry Allweather, however, had realised where he was and had got to his feet. His face, to which, a moment before, the ruddy colour had begun to return, was greenish-grey again, like dirty paper. His eyes were glassy and distended with fright, and he turned his head about and sniffed at the air. The fumes of the boiling tar, notwithstanding the closed windows, had filtered into the room; but what there was so alarming in the smell Doctor

Causton could not understand. He tried to get the man to lie down again, but now Allweather was in a fever to be off. He was all right, quite all right: it was only a touch of the sun; he must go at once; and—would the Doctor mind if he went out the back way, through the garden-gate into the lane? There was sure to be a little crowd in front of the house, for many people had seen him fall, and he did not want to be plagued with their questions. . . . And as there was no staying him, the Doctor let him out by the garden-door, whence he fled away along the lane to fetch his trap from the Heartsease Inn, where he always put it up when he drove into the village.

Doctor Causton looked after his hurrying figure and wondered. The 'touch of sun' was all nonsense, of course: a man who worked in the open throughout the year, who never wore a hat if he could help it, and who otherwise was in the best of health, did not fall down from sunstroke on a July day of peculiar mildness. Harry Allweather had fainted of fright, induced apparently by the smell of tar. Through the Doctor's imaginative mind, corrupted by the reading of too many novels, the wildest conjectures took flight. But as he had a large measure of regard for the man, he was also genuinely concerned for his welfare; and he sought in vain for anything he knew of in Allweather's life that would account for this seizure.

In small rural communities, where the same families have lived side by side for centuries, and where the cycle of eventless days is broken only by the phenomena of birth and death, facts and traditions are handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another, and any bizarre occurrence, however trifling, may be perpetuated no less carefully than are the tales of battles and earthquakes in the greater world beyond. So it happened that the story of Harry Allweather's alien race and singular name was known to every soul in Nether Mallow. His great-great-grandfather, it was said, at a period identified vaguely as 'the old days,' had migrated to the village from somewhere further in the west. He came alone and penniless; and legend ascribed his flight (as it was assumed to be) to various causes far from creditable and all apocryphal. For, in fact, nothing was known about this man: he was cast up out of the infinite with only his speech to betray his birth in the cider country; and no one ever heard his name. Why he settled in Nether Mallow, and how he lived there, were details long forgotten. From his habit of wandering about the Plain, careless

of wind or flood or snow, at times when rational folk latched their casements and huddled over fires, he was given the nickname of Tom Allweather. The register of the Parish Church of St. Nicholas and St. Jude bore witness to his marriage, under this name, with a woman of the village ; and they had a son. It was this son who obtained in perpetuity the freehold of Barshackle Farm, three miles out of Nether Mallow on the Plain, in payment, it was believed, for some flagitious service rendered to the squire of the manor. In this farm his descendants had lived and thrived. They married and gave in marriage in their adopted parish, and for the rest lived in a solitary, uncompanionable way in that lonely farmstead under Barshackle Hill. Their peculiarities, insignificant in themselves, were noted and remembered by their neighbours. 'As proud as an Allweather' became a proverb. So the years and generations passed away : the family speech outgrew its western burr, the fanciful surname was softened, when spoken, into Allether ; and now Harry, the last of his race, was a bachelor of nearly forty. He was a great tall figure of a man, with black hair and eyes and a skin burnt as brown as a chestnut. For his type he was well educated, a turn for reading having been fostered by Doctor Causton, who lent him books and recommended others for him to buy. When the Doctor drove past Barshackle on his way home from some outlying case, he would usually call in for half an hour or so ; and the farmer, who toward his own kind seemed as indifferent and taciturn as any of his forebears, came in time to return these visits whenever he happened to be in Nether Mallow ; so that between the two there sprang up a sort of intimacy, based, as the Doctor put it, solely on the politer letters. For of his private affairs Harry Allweather never spoke at all.

Such was the man who, on that July afternoon, was driving his cob up the long slope out of the village as though the furies were behind him. The waning hours of day, to rebuke him for his noisy flight, were infinitely calm : in the valleys, where the clay enabled trees to grow in some profusion, the foliage drooped unmoving, and the rare smoke of farms stood up in the still air like pencilled scrolls of white against the blue. Even on the upland there was no wind but that of his own movement, nor in the sky one drifting cloud, but only a film of vapour that softened the sun's heat and blurred his racing shadow. Sheep in hundreds moved almost imperceptibly along the slopes, their bells sounding ; and rabbits ran and leapt and peeped upon the trenches which long-forgotten peoples had dug

on every summit. But for these earthworks and the white and curving road there was no sign of human labour in all that rolling landscape, once the spire of Nether Mallow had sunk from view; until, as Harry Allweather topped the rise above the village, he could see, many miles away across the undulations of the Plain, the greater spire of Salisbury uplifted like a sword into the sky.

The scene, with this bright symbol in the midst, was never stale to one who loved the country as he had come to love it; and every time he climbed the hill and saw the Plain unrolled before him, it wrought upon his untaught sense of beauty like a song. But that day, for once, he was out of sympathy with Nature. He looked almost with horror at that austere expanse of green, which, after the passage of a thousand years, unmoved by the caress of sunshine or the whip of rain and snow, had not altered by so much as a wrinkle of turf or a blade of grass. He had fled homeward instinctively, as a wounded animal will fly to its burrow; but now the thought of his farm, sunk in its lonely valley, rose up before him like a nightmare; and he began to regret the little busy world of Nether Mallow. The more solitary hollows of the Plain are not the best havens from evil dreams. Harry Allweather had been inclined to pride himself because he was unlike, and did not like, other men; and in this, and his genuine love of Nature, had believed himself to bear some affinity to Thoreau, the archetype of selfishness. But Thoreau's scheme of philosophy offered no consolations to one who was tortured by fear. And it was the worst part of Harry Allweather's affliction that he did not know of what he was afraid.

II.

They are a healthy folk in and about Nether Mallow, and Doctor Causton's practice was in no way comparable to that of a London consultant. In short, often he had very little to do; and when he received, two days later, a one-line note from the farmer, begging him to come out to Barshackle, he was able to ride there on his bicycle the same afternoon. He was impelled both by curiosity and by kindness, for the note was as urgent as it was terse.

'DEAR DOCTOR (wrote Allweather),—Come and see me if you can. I think I am going mad.

H. A.'

Barshackle farmhouse was a low, stained, forbidding structure of stone, sunk in a precipitous re-entrant beneath the great hill.

Its original owners had been noted horse thieves, and the early Allweathers were believed to have carried on that profitable occupation. Doctor Causton arrived about four o'clock, at which hour, during the summer, the farmer almost invariably was at work on his land. But now Harry Allweather was at the door to meet his visitor—and such a Harry Allweather as the Doctor had never seen before. The man was a shocking travesty of his normal self. His eyes were dull and heavy, his colour was gone, his great fingers were twitching as he pulled at his beard. The hand mark of fear is unmistakable; and fear—acute, paralysing fear—was printed plain upon his face.

'I thought you would come,' he said; and taking the other by the arm (the Doctor could feel the fingers jump upon his sleeve) he led him into the parlour. This was a low-pitched room, dark and sinister, as some rooms are, with one small leaded window that looked out upon a grove of elders trooping up Barshackle Hill. That immense escarpment of turf lay vivid in the sunshine; the scent of flowers and grass came in through the open lattice, and a little wind moved among the elder leaves; but twilight lived always within the room itself. It seemed a significant thing to Doctor Causton that Harry Allweather, who loved light and the open air, should draw him into this winter cell to talk.

'Now, Allweather,' the Doctor said as they entered, 'what is the matter?'

'I wish to God I knew!' the farmer cried furiously, swinging round to face him. 'Man, I'd give all I have to know! What is it indeed? You may well ask . . . ! Nothing! Nothing at all! And I'm going mad with it . . . !'

He raised his great fists above his head, so that they almost struck the beams of the low ceiling, and stood there shaking with a sudden freshet of bewildered wrath. Then his hands dropped; and, with a return to the sullen, fearful manner with which he had first greeted the Doctor, he continued in a calmer voice:

'I'll tell you what I can, though it's little enough and silly enough, you'll say. . . . I came to see you two days ago without a care in the world. I never talk about my own affairs, and people think, I dare say, that because I don't gabble to every Tom, Dick and Harry I must have something to hide. But they're wrong. I've nothing to hide and nothing even to worry me—until two days ago. I have no secrets. I have thought myself a fortunate man. . . . I came to see you the other day, Doctor, just as I have

often come before. I wanted to borrow that Stevenson you spoke of. I put my trap up at the Heartsease (I am going over all this to try and show you how normal everything was), and then I walked down to the corner by your house—as I have done a hundred times. At the corner I saw the men laying that creosote stuff on the road. I must have smelt it as I came along, but I thought nothing about it. There is nothing very dreadful about pitch, is there? I have handled plenty of it myself before this. . . . What happened at the corner I—I can't describe. I saw the men, and the black barrels all smoking, and suddenly I went deadly sick—sick of fright. God alone knows why. It was absolute, raging terror! Terror of nothing . . . ! I could have screamed. Perhaps I did, and apparently I fainted, which I have never done before in all my life! Fainted of fright . . . ! And when I came to in your room and smelt that accursed pitch again it all came back to me, and it has been with me ever since. I'm frightened now, Doctor—frightened like a child! And I don't know why. But it's killing me . . . ! That's all. . . .'

He threw his hands out with a despairing gesture and walked away across the room. From the hillside filtered a delicate chime of sheep-bells, and a droning bee swung past the window. Doctor Causton found the whole business a little unreal.

'But think, man!' he said. 'Think! There must be some association of ideas in your mind. . . . This pitch, now——'

'Think!' Harry Allweather cried bitterly. 'I have done nothing but think. I can't work—I can't read—I can't sleep. This thing is always with me. Don't you understand that I'm really hideously frightened—now, while I'm talking to you? It's like ice on my heart. Do you suppose I haven't thought about it? It never lets me forget. It is always with me. I could stand it if it had any meaning for me, but it is absolutely unintelligible: just stark, brutal terror, by itself. . . . "It is Fear, oh Little Hunter, it is Fear!" That is just what it is, Doctor; and I know I shall be raving mad in a week if it goes on . . . !'

He moved back to the fireplace and, taking up a pipe, began to fill it mechanically. Doctor Causton made sympathetic sounds and waited for further enlightenment.

'I said just now,' the farmer continued, 'that this attack, or whatever you like to call it, is absolutely meaningless to me. So it is; but there is something more. It is so vague, so like bits of a dream that one remembers after waking, that I don't know whether

it is cause or effect. It seems to me—I don't know whether I can make myself clear—it seems to me that in our brains are secret places, little cells of memory with hidden doors that fly open only when by chance we stumble on the catch. We may never stumble on it; and then the secret places are never opened in our lifetime, but are passed on, perhaps, still sealed and unsuspected, to our children. I dare say one of your philosophers has put this idea in much better words, but that is how I have thought it out; and I believe that when I came down to the village the other day and saw those men with their black ladles and dripping tar-barrels, the sight touched the spring of one of those little cells in my brain, opened the door, and let loose the horrible thing that has been lying there unknown for years and generations. . . . It has nothing to do with my life: it may be something that happened to my father or my grandfather or my great-grandfather. . . . Do you understand what I mean? Don't you think that such a thing is possible? There is no other way of explaining it. . . . And since then, during these two days, I—I have caught glimpses of what it is. Only glimpses: they mean nothing whatever to me; they are as senseless as the maddest dream. You know how suddenly pictures, that one cannot explain, jump into one's mind. These are like that, only not half so clear. . . . One such picture, if it can be called a picture, is of the men with black ladles and barrels of pitch, but these are not the same men. Another is of men in red, like soldiers. Then sometimes I see a wide square, like a market-place, with old, old houses round it. And worst of all, there is a face—a man's face, leering and dark and cruel, with something black and shadowy falling all about it. . . . Oh, God! that face! I can't talk of it! I can't talk of it . . . !'

His voice rose to a scream, and throwing his unlighted pipe to the floor he covered his face with his hands. Doctor Causton, sincerely distressed, was still at a loss for words. It would have been childish to address soothing phrases to a man in such an agony of mind and spirit as Harry Allweather; and the whole case seemed to move in an orbit beyond a country practitioner's comprehension. Few of the Doctor's patients were afflicted with nerves, and the only form of delusion known to them was that induced by strong drink. Nevertheless, he endeavoured to quiet the farmer in his best professional manner.

'You must stop this, Allweather!' he said peremptorily. 'Pull yourself together, man! It is not like you to be scared of bogies.'

Harry Allweather lifted his stricken face from between his hands.

'But what is it?' he cried. 'What is it? Why should I be tortured like this? What have I done? I'm afraid, I tell you—afraid!'

'Go out and work,' said the Doctor. 'Or, better still, go away for a while. Can you leave the farm?'

'No!' said the farmer abruptly. 'I'll not go away.' He shook himself, as a dog will on leaving the water. The Doctor's suggestion had roused his old combative spirit. 'I'm ashamed of myself,' he said, 'but I feel better for having told you. I suppose one can keep too much to oneself. . . . No, I shall stay here and work—work till I drop. I'll kill this damned nonsense! I'm not a child, to be scared of dreams. . . .'

These were brave words; but the transition from panic to valour was too sudden to give Doctor Causton any faith in its permanence. The farmer was a broken man, whatever he might say: his drawn face and restless hands spoke plainly for any dullard to see; and the Doctor was no dullard. Once more he urged the other to take a holiday, but in vain. Harry Allweather was busy fanning his new-found flame of courage.

'Come and stay with me for a few days,' the doctor said at length. 'It will be better than mooning about in this dreary abomination of a house. It's only nerves, you know. A tonic and the almost metropolitan gaiety of Nether Mallow are what you want.'

'A tonic!' cried Harry Allweather, and laughed. 'Send me all the bottles in your dispensary if you like, Doctor; but I'll not be driven from here.' And then, with an assumption of indifference, he put a question: 'Have those men left the village?'

'They finished yesterday,' said Doctor Causton.

'Then I'll come and see you again,' the farmer said. 'I'm grateful to you, Doctor, and I'm feeling better. It is only nerves, after all, as you say. They are odd things, these nerves of ours.'

He refused to be drawn again on to the subject of his terrors but talked lightly of other matters; and presently Doctor Causton went away, greatly troubled in mind for his friend's sanity. To Harry Allweather's theory of bogie cupboards in the brain he attached little value. A lesion sounded much more rational and scientific. . . . And that night he was extremely annoyed because he dreamed of fiendish men in black and scarlet, and of a huge wicked face that leered and mowed at him.

III.

It was the Doctor's good or ill fortune to play his part in the end, as he had played it in the beginning, of Harry Allweather's tragic case. Two more days passed, during which he heard nothing of the farmer. A sudden outbreak of measles depleted the classes at the village school and kept him for the time being actively employed. The third day was a Sunday. About four o'clock in the morning he was aroused from his sleep by the violent pealing of his night bell, and on looking out of his bedroom window he saw the lamps of a dog-cart flaring in the street below. Already dawn was breaking, but the shadows of the valley still lay like a pool of ink over the village. The comparative rarity of such untimely calls made them no more welcome when they came; and it was a sour-faced and irritable man who, candle in hand, opened his front door and found Harry Allweather standing there.

'Good Lord, Allweather!' he cried. 'What's wrong now?'

'I want you to come with me,' the farmer said. He stood stooping in the doorway, and as he spoke he turned his head sharply as though listening for some sound outside. His great figure, oddly crouched—almost cowering, as the Doctor thought—was black against the glare of the lamps behind him, and upon his face the wavering candle cast unquiet lights and shadows, that blended and dissolved again like images in water, so that it was not easy to see the man beneath; but there was that in his bearing which awoke a strong sense of alarm and distaste in Doctor Causton.

'Anybody ill?' the latter asked; but he knew perfectly well who it was that was ill.

'I'll tell you as we go,' said Harry Allweather. 'I can't wait.' His voice grew shrill and urgent, and he put out a hand to clutch the other's sleeve. 'Come, Doctor, for God's sake! I must go, and the fear of it is killing me!'

'My dear man,' said Doctor Causton, 'do you realise what the hour is? Come in and talk it over. Where do you want me to go?'

But Harry Allweather, it was now plain, was in a state bordering on panic. He shook with anxiety to be off, and yet clearly stood in abject terror of what lay before him if he went; and again he twisted his head toward the dark street to stare and listen.

'Is anyone out there?' the Doctor asked sharply.

'Yes, yes!' the farmer cried. 'They're waiting for me.'

They're calling now. . . . Can't you hear them ? Listen . . . !' He held up a hand for silence and bent his head again toward the door ; but the Doctor could hear nothing but the distant crowing of a cock. And then Harry Allweather was at him again, pulling his arm, pleading with him to come—to come at once. . . . There was something infinitely pitiful in this strong man begging, like a child, for company in the dark. It was evident to Doctor Causton that the farmer's delusions had finally unsettled his reason. He could not say where he was going, but only that he must go—that 'they' were calling to him. His agitation was so extreme that he could hardly speak. With his eyes on the street he began to pull the Doctor toward the trap ; and that long-suffering but humane man, fearing a violent end to this scene if he did not give way, presently found himself, inadequately clad in trousers, shirt, overcoat and cap, rattling down the sleeping village behind the farmer's cob.

They were driving westward, towards Bledcaster. It was still very dark in the valley, but the constellations were paling overhead ; and behind these frantic travellers the sky was whitening above the hills. Except for the occasional 'Cocorico ! Cocorico !' of some over-zealous rooster, the rattle of their wheels was the only sound that broke the inimitable stillness of the dawn ; but the world was stirring in its sleep, and the perfume of leaves and blossoms, faint and exquisite, stole upon the senses. The Doctor was struck by the incongruity between the beauty of the morning and their hare-brained errand.

'Of course I'm quite mad,' he said presently. 'And now, Allweather, perhaps you will kindly tell me where we are supposed to be going.'

The farmer was crouched forward, staring before him. He had not spoken since they left the Doctor's house, but now that he had accomplished his object his fever of anxiety seemed to have abated, and he allowed the cob to keep its own pace. It was clear, however, that he still watched and listened for the voices he believed to be calling him ; and his companion, who could neither hear nor see anything unusual in front of them, discovered himself presently, to his great disgust, to be infected also by this delusion. Not that he heard anything ; but he caught himself hearkening for sounds through the rattle of the hooves and wheels ; and there grew upon him the uncanny conviction that they were being *led*. . . .

'Where are you taking me, Allweather?' he asked again.

'I don't know,' said Harry Allweather. He spoke so low that the other could scarcely hear him. 'I don't know. But they are calling me, and I must follow. . . . Don't you hear them?'

'No!' replied the Doctor, with some asperity. 'And if you want to know, Allweather, I don't believe you do either. Use a little common sense, man! What are these precious voices saying to you?'

But the farmer did not seem to hear him.

'Doctor,' he asked, 'have you ever heard of Tom Boilman?'

'Never,' said Dr. Causton. 'Who was he?'

'This evening,' said Harry Allweather, while the Doctor leaned toward him to catch his words—'this evening—or, rather, last evening—just after dark, I heard a voice calling me. It was in the house—a poor, thin voice, like a soul in torment. "Tom Boilman!"' it said. "Tom Boilman! Aren't you coming, Tom Boilman? We've waited for you a weary, weary time. . . ." So it went on. All the evening and the night it was calling about the house. And there were other voices, but always the same words. . . . I think I was nearly mad before this began: I've been in hell again since I saw you—scared out of my life, and not a whit nearer knowing what it was all about; but the voices! Oh, God, the voices . . . ! Listen! they're calling now!'

'Stop this, Allweather!' the Doctor cried. 'Don't be an idiot! What has this Tom Boilman to do with you?'

'It is me they mean,' the farmer said.

'But why? Have you ever heard of such a person?'

'Never. But it is myself they are calling. . . . I know it well enough. All night they have been crying to me to come—crying that they have been waiting a long, long time for me; and now they are leading me. . . . But where, Doctor? Where . . . ? They are calling in front of us along the road. Can't you hear them now?'

Doctor Causton denied that he could, with some vehemence; but as the farmer clutched his arm and urged him to listen once again, he felt his hair rise and the flesh shiver on his back, for he could have sworn that a small voice was crying out far away down the dark road. And to add to his discomfort, Harry Allweather answered it.

'I'm coming! I'm coming!' he cried, and, for the first time, began to lash at the cob.

For the remainder of that mad ride the Doctor simply clung to his seat and prayed to Heaven to deliver him from lunatics. The light dogcart rolled and bounded like a live creature. They flashed through sleeping villages, now invaded by the growing daylight, and in time came to one where doors and windows were opening and astonished faces peered out at them. The day had come: only a single pale planet hung in the west, while all about them sounded a prodigious twitter of bird voices; and suddenly, from over the hills at their back, the level rays of the sun lit up the highway and flung before them a grotesque silhouette of their insane career. Shortly after this they took in their stride, as it were, a small town which the Doctor knew to lie half-way to Bled-caster; and a dial in the street informed him that the hour was six o'clock.

He had endeavoured, more than once, to expostulate with Harry Allweather about the folly of these proceedings, but the farmer did not even answer. He appeared to have forgotten his companion's presence. He spoke only to urge his horse to greater efforts and occasionally to cry, in answer to the voices he alone could hear, 'I'm coming! I'm coming!' Doctor Causton, whom daylight and the perpetual jolting had rendered profoundly sceptical once more, thought this assurance rather superfluous. It was quite obvious that they were coming—but where? When was this flight to end? The horse—a willing, sturdy little beast—was beginning to flag; but still Harry Allweather, who had been used to love all animals, punished it without mercy.

At length there came a time when the cob could do no more. It fell into a walk, sobbing painfully with every breath, and all the farmer's blows and curses failed to rouse it. Doctor Causton, indeed, stayed the whip and wrenched it from the other's hand.

'For shame!' he said. 'You're killing the poor brute!'

'And why not?' the farmer cried, turning a maniacal face to his. 'I'm being killed myself—by inches! Oh, God! are we not there yet? When shall I have peace?'

They were the first words he had spoken to the Doctor for an hour, and without any more he leaped down from the trap and set off at a round pace on foot. For a minute or two Doctor Causton remained in his seat. Mortified at the ridiculous situation in which he found himself, his first inclination was to leave the farmer to his own devices. But the man, as he reflected, was no longer sane: duty and friendship alike urged him to pursue; and with a groan

he too climbed down and followed, leaving the trap and the exhausted cob derelict by the roadside.

From now to the end Doctor Causton travelled in a kind of nightmare. When, with difficulty, he overtook the farmer, who was striding at a great pace, the latter made no sign of recognition. He plodded sullenly on, his burning eyes staring ahead, his lips muttering unintelligible words, his ear continually turned to listen for his beckoning ghosts. His hat had fallen off long before, and occasionally, with a distracted gesture, he passed his hand through his hair. He moved, for all his speed, like a man in a stupor; and indeed there seemed to the Doctor to be something almost superhuman in his mechanical energy. Apparently he had eaten little and slept hardly at all for nearly a week, yet still he pounded on, mile after mile. Early as it was, the sun was powerful; and Doctor Causton, in his absurd costume, of which he was miserably conscious, grew uncomfortably hot. He longed for a drink, but the hour and day were against him; he would have bartered his soul for a cigarette, but he had none with him, nor even a penny-piece with which to buy any. His sole cause for gratitude lay in the fact that they met but few other wayfarers. Those whom they did encounter invariably paused to stare back after these inexplicable pilgrims.

So their journey dragged to its conclusion, a strange mixture of the ludicrous and tragic. Harry Allweather lived now entirely in the world of his delusions. He staggered on ahead, panting and muttering; and the Doctor, the comic element in the play, followed blasphemously after. It says much for his humanity and zeal that he did not abandon his charge. And so, when the pair had traversed many miles and several other half-awakened villages, they came, about half-past eight in the morning, to the outer houses of Bledcaster.

That venerable city presented an unwelcome air of liveliness, for people were returning from the early service in the cathedral. From the barracks on the hill a bugle call was sounding; and Harry Allweather, as he heard it, stopped and clapped his hand to his head, like a man whose memory is stirred. The doctor hoped for a moment that this was a sign of returning sanity.

'Now, Allweather,' he said, 'there's a friend of mine, Dr. Brooke, in the High Street. We'll go and beg breakfast off him, and a wash.'

But Harry Allweather only stared at his companion with a pitiful lack of understanding. If the Doctor's hope had been

sincere, it was crushed then for ever ; for the farmer's eyes were vacant and dim, and his whole expression spoke only too plainly of the utter annihilation of his mind. The strain had been too great, even for that obstinate and manly soul : the voices had called to him too often. It was not the least pitiful part of his collapse that he was become quiet even to docility. He looked at Doctor Causton with the dumb patience of some old and weary dog. The Doctor, shocked out of his own small grievances by this calamity, took him by the arm and led him through the wondering church-comers toward the High Street.

At the east end of Bledcaster, as everybody knows, a wide market square interposes between the barracks and the cathedral—a square still surrounded in part by gabled Tudor houses and dominated by the historic cross which a momentarily pious queen caused to be erected there. As the dusty and weary travellers entered this enclosure, the great figure of the farmer stooping on the Doctor's arm, there came from a street on their right a sudden outburst of military music ; and, a moment after, the band and the leading fours of the battalion in garrison in the town swung into view on their way to the cathedral. Doctor Causton felt his companion stiffen and halt. Harry Allweather, with his hand to his head and an expression of the most poignant agony on his face, was staring at the oncoming soldiers. So he stood for a moment, while the band, playing the regimental march, came steadily onward with the long column of red-coats in perfect step behind ; and then he pulled the Doctor close to him and, with an air of profound cunning, whispered in his ear :

‘What is the badge on their caps ?’

‘I can't see,’ said Doctor Causton. ‘But I believe they are a local regiment—Wiltshires or Dorsets. Wait a moment . . .’

‘Is it a lamb ?’ the farmer whispered. ‘Oh, is it a lamb ?’

‘Wait . . .’ the Doctor repeated, wondering what new delusion was at large in the brain of his unhappy friend. But Harry Allweather could not wait. He gave a sudden loud cry :

‘Yes, I'm coming . . . coming . . . !’

And with that he tore himself from the Doctor's grasp and ran across the great sunlit square towards the marching regiment. He seemed to be calling as he ran, but his words were drowned by the brass and drums. The Doctor had followed immediately ; but he had not taken a dozen steps when he saw the farmer, some yards in front, throw out his hands and fall forward upon his face on the

square, within a musket-length of the swinging ranks of red. And when he reached the prostrate figure he knew at once that the pilgrimage and persecution of Harry Allweather were alike for ever at an end.

IV.

All truly literary people like their stories, whether fact or fiction, to be rounded off in a finished manner. A story that has no end is an abomination, like a headless man. And Doctor Causton always maintained that the redeeming feature in this lamentable affair was the way in which he was presented, before the morning was out, with those missing facts that alone could make it intelligible. Even so, of course, there was much that no one could explain.

When the Doctor had seen the body of poor Harry Allweather removed to a temporary resting-place, and had satisfied a sceptical constabulary that he himself was a reputable citizen, he made his way with all speed to the house of his fellow-practitioner in the High Street. There he was soon supplied with some additional articles of attire, a hot bath, and a breakfast. Doctor Brooke, who was preparing himself for church, looked in upon his friend now and then and heard a few details of the case.

'What did the fellow die of?' he asked on one of these visits.

'I shall certify it as heart failure, of course,' said Doctor Causton; 'and so it was; but it would be truer to say he died of fright.'

A little later, as Doctor Brooke was pulling on his gloves in the hall, his guest came running out to him with a question:

'I say, Brooke, have you ever heard of anyone called Tom Boilman?'

'Most certainly,' Doctor Brooke replied. 'He was quite a well-known personage here.'

'The deuce he was!' the other cried. 'Who was he?'

'By one account,' said Doctor Brooke, 'he was a small shop-keeper. Other people say he was merely a labourer. He came into infamy about the time of the Monmouth rebellion, in which apparently he was involved. You know, of course, that Jeffreys spent two characteristic days in Bledcaster. Kirke and his lambs were here too, and between them they dispatched nearly a hundred people of this town to a better world or the plantations—to say nothing of others from the country round about. The gallows was in the market-place, near the cross, where your farmer friend died; and Kirke and his officers sat in the window of one of the houses

there and drank bumpers as the poor fellows were turned off. And there were great tubs of pitch in which they seethed the limbs of the victims after they had been drawn and quartered. Life was a cheery business in those days. . . . Well, this Tom Boilman—I don't think his real name is known—came before the court quite early in the proceedings. He seems to have been absolutely paralysed with terror. That was not unusual when Jeffreys was on the bench: you can hear stories in the town to this day of how he looked and spoke, how he laughed and ranted and cursed, and how he used to lean forward, with his wig falling all round his wicked face, and simply hypnotise the prisoners and witnesses by the glare of his eyes. I can assure you he is not forgotten in Bled-caster. . . . This poor devil of a shopkeeper, or whatever he was, was so mad with fright that to save his life he undertook to work one of the caldrons of pitch, and boil the legs and arms of his own friends. A pretty story, what . . . ? It was the last piece of work he ever did here. No one would speak to him afterwards: people got out of his way in the street, and his life wasn't safe. The very children called him Tom Boilman. . . . Eventually he disappeared. By one account he was blasted by lightning, but the more probable story is that he simply ran away to some place where he would not be known. Quite a crop of legends grew up about him, and he has even made his way into authorised history. You'll find something about him in Macaulay. . . . Well, I must be going. See you at lunch. . . .'

Doctor Causton returned to his breakfast in a thoughtful mood.

DOUGLAS G. BROWNE.

*IN AN AIRSHIP FACTORY: MAKING
THE ENVELOPES.*

BY MRS. N. F. USBORNE.

I PEEPED into the workshop and asked one of the girls if I could see the forewoman.

It was an immense workshop.

Long tables were ranged down either side, and groups of girls in blue overalls were busily engaged in doing something or other with large pieces of fabric. Away at the far end of the cathedral-like building (cathedral-like only in size, for the sun was streaming in through the glass roof and windows, flooding everything with brilliant light) more blue figures—tiny blue specks—were moving about in the distance.

In the middle of the floor, tumbled masses of greyish fabric were lying spread out, and here and there girls squatted or knelt amongst them, all working busily.

A thing on wheels, which at first glance looked like a barrel-organ, but which I afterwards discovered was a sewing machine, was being moved across from one table to another, and at the far end of the room, a great white mass like a half-collapsed balloon was heaving and quivering on the floor, while a crowd of blue figures swarmed round it, over it, and on top of it, sometimes disappearing altogether in its huge, billowy folds. . . .

Five minutes later, I, too, was a blue-overalled worker at one of the tables.

A bright-eyed girl with dark hair and a necklace of sham pearls was told off to show me what to do.

From one end of the table this girl picked up a brown bundle of rubber-proofed fabric; it was the colour of ordinary brown paper, very smooth without being shiny, and having in certain lights the downy appearance of velvet. She began to pick at a large but obstinate knot in the tape which held it together; presently, growing impatient, she 'pinched' a pair of scissors from the adjoining table, and snipped the bundle open.

I may as well say here that there exists a very simple etiquette about 'pinching' (or borrowing without leave) other people's possessions—not personal belongings, but all that paraphernalia

of pencils, brushes, scissors, rollers, rulers, which are supplied by the Management. It is simply this: you may lawfully 'pinch' anything you like, provided the owner does not find you out; if, however, you should have the ill-luck to be found out—then, retrospectively, your act becomes unlawful, and there is no end of a row.

The brown bundle consisted of a number of separate pieces of varying sizes and shapes, each piece being marked with distinguishing letters and figures in big blue type. I was initiated into the mysteries of these marks by my bright-eyed instructress, who looked at me, I thought, as though she hoped it would be too difficult for me to understand.

Some of the pieces were marked 'As Drawn,' and others 'Opposite'; some had letters, others figures; and all of them had to be joined together, each one in its appointed place.

The other workers at the table were joining long seams with sticky solution out of a tin; pasting away with short, stubbly brushes, and chattering hard all the time.

A pretty girl with fair, tousled hair eyed me critically across the table, and then smiled.

'Feel a bit orkward at fust, down't yer?' she said in a Cockney drawl. (I nodded, but I must confess it was an untruthful nod.) 'Comin' into a fresh plice. With everythink stringe. Ah felt crool at fust when Ah kime 'ere. But yer soon git used to it.'

She smiled again, and I smiled back. There was something rather sweet and sympathetic in her face. . . .

Next to her was Maisie, singing. Maisie is a joy. I came to know her later on. She was married early in the war, and her husband is at the front. Against the day when he comes home, Maisie is proudly piling up her separation allowance in a tin box under her bed. She boasts of having saved twelve pounds; but at heart—tragic to relate—she is a spendthrift. She 'borrows' money from her box, buys new hats, and treats wounded Tommies to the Pictures—always secure in the thought, however, that the money is only 'borrowed' and that every penny will be paid back in time. Meanwhile the box is empty. . . . Maisie is really charming.

By the time my companion and I had successfully disentangled the 'Opposites' from the 'As Drawns' and laid the appropriate pieces in the appointed places, there were no available tins of solution. This necessitated a pilgrimage to a shed outside, where

two giant jars of messy brown stuff looking like a mixture of toffee and cod-liver oil stood tipsily on a table.

Two coats of solution are applied to the seam to be joined. When it has partly dried, one edge of the fabric is turned up over the other and every tiniest crease smoothed away with the fingers. As soon as the seam is flat and smooth, a small metal roller is worked backwards and forwards over the join, and a bag full of chalk rubbed along its length to dry up any overflow of solution that may have worked its way out.

At other tables there is different work.

First, there is the 'marking-out' table. Here, each separate piece of fabric that goes to the making of an airship is marked out with pencil and ruler. In the type of airship on which we were working, there are over 2000 separate pieces in one envelope.

At the next table, two girls with giant pairs of scissors and patient faces do the cutting out. Day after day, week after week, and month after month, one airship after another passes, in small pieces, across their table. The click-click of their scissors grows as monotonous as the ticking of a clock.

It is wonderful to look at the finished article—the great grey monster ready for doping, that is one day going to soar up into the clouds—and to think that it has all been cut out, bit by bit, by two patient girls with two large pairs of scissors. . . .

After the pieces have been marked out, cut out, and the seams solutioned together, they are finished off with a double row of machine stitching in an electric sewing machine.

It is a grand thing to watch the machinists. No handle is turned, no foot-treadle worked; a lever is simply pressed down with the foot, and away go two little needles threaded with thick white thread, plunging in and out of the double rubber seam with such force and speed that one wonders how the machinist can keep her head.

Sometimes as we are hard at work, there is a sudden sound of tramping feet, and a long line of men come marching down the workshop carrying on their shoulders a glittering silver envelope tied up with yellow tapes.

Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! In they come—fifty or sixty of them, their strong backs bent down with the weight of their burden. For all the world, it is like a huge silver dragon in a Drury Lane pantomime.

Seventy-four pairs of eyes look up from their work ; seventy-four pairs of hands for the moment are idle, and a sudden titter—a giggle—runs through the workshop. For, heading the procession, and walking with a ridiculous music-hall strut, a funny little man with a bright red moustache (a false one) is playing the fool to amuse the girls, or possibly to amuse himself.

His antics are very funny. Now and then he will break into an elegant *pas-seul* and dance neatly down the room, in spite of the fact that his head and shoulders support a heavy weight.

The girls love him ; they call him 'Little Tuppy,' but his real name is a dignified one with a flavour of ancient lineage.

Nick-names are very much the fashion in the workshop. If you are anybody at all, you have a nick-name. In some cases, as in the case of Mr. 'Fish-and-Chips,' your real name is not known.

'Little Tuppy' is always a source of amusement, but never was he so funny as on the sole occasion when he meant to be serious. That was when he had a row with 'Ethel.' 'Ethel' is a large, stalwart, pink, British workman who had occasion to knock Tuppy down. Everyone watched to see what would happen. Like a flash of lightning, and with extreme ferocity, Tuppy leapt to his feet and bit 'Ethel' in the back !

In putting the envelope together it is sometimes necessary to inflate part of it with air, and to crawl inside, as there are certain parts which cannot be reached in any other way.

The air is pumped into the ship through a fat pipe of rubber tubing.

The great mass of fabric lying on the floor begins to shiver and shake as the air rushes in, and soon there emerges from it a great bubble of fabric, quivering like a jelly, which grows and grows until its proportions are huge.

As soon as the ship is sufficiently inflated, the manager gives a sign for the girls to go in, and one by one, armed with the necessary tools, they crawl in on all fours through a tiny opening into a wonderful yellow banana-shaped tent, and work as they rarely work at any other time. The one idea they have is to get out again as soon as possible, for the air inside the envelope is very hot and stuffy, and the dope with which the ship is treated gives off an unpleasant smell with an intoxicating effect.

On one occasion, a great lump in the fabric aroused the curiosity of the girls, and on going to investigate it the lump was suddenly heard to murmur in a weak voice : 'Can't breathe. Lost my way.'

It turned out to be one of the Inspectors, who had crawled in a wrong direction, lost his way, and become overpowered by the dope. He was dragged out in a perfectly intoxicated condition.

Even after a few minutes inside the envelope, somebody is sure to say :

'Golly. Ah'm goin' 'ot and caold all daown mah back,' and the lady thus afflicted will make a dive for the end of the blow-pipe, hold it up to her face, and take a few reviving gulps from the hissing stream of air.

At 1 P.M. a shrill whistle is blown, and instantly there is a mad rush for the door. It is as if the signal had been given for a race to begin.

In the dressing-room there is a wild scramble of arms and legs and boots and hats, and half the girls have vanished before you can look round. The other half—clattering plates and spilling things, laughing, chaffing, and jabbering—gather round the tables of the mess-room.

A sixpenny dinner consisting of one large and excellently cooked plate of meat and vegetables, which comes in from the kitchen piping hot, is provided daily for those who can afford it. Those who cannot—and these are in the majority—bring from their homes various kinds of food in paper bags. A pie-dish tied up in paper, the contents of which can be warmed up in the kitchen free of charge, is the most popular method of dealing with this problem.

After ten minutes of silence broken only by the gulping sound of hungry people, chaff and chatter burst out afresh.

A snatch of song sounds from one corner of the room.

'Didn't knaow Ah 'ad a luvvely voice, did jer?' says the singer with a broad grin.

'Oo d'yer git it from—yer father or yer mother?'

'Ah git it from mah mother,' replies the singer, whose musical talent is not very obvious. 'Mah mother can sing as good as she can shout.'

Somewhere else in the room, one of the girls is telling fortunes out of tea-cups. The manner of tipping up the cup with a twist so that the tea-leaves are left inside while the last drops of tea trickle out on to the floor, has obviously been practised for many months—or years.

'Ah see a path 'ere,' says the Fortune Teller, gazing into a dense clump of tea-leaves without shape or form, 'an' 'alf wy up

Ah sees a turning, an' as clear as anythink, mah deah, Ah sees yer tike that turning—an' it turns out to be the wrong one! An' Ah see a crowded plice, an' Ah see lots of people, an' laghts, an'——'

'Ah knaow wot that is,' says the owner of the tea-cup with a gleam in her eye, 'that's the—— Empire' (mentioning the name of a local music-hall). 'Ah'm goin' there to-naght.'

'That's raght,' says the Fortune Teller, and winds up the dreary recital with the usual formula about getting a letter and a parcel, without which no fortune is complete.

It is difficult to believe, when next the whistle is blown, that an hour has really passed. With unwilling steps, the girls file slowly back to work, and through the early part of the afternoon there is a feeling of sullen slackness in the air. When the days are warm and sunny, and the factory hot, the distastè for work becomes acute. The two hours between two and four are by far the longest in the day; it is then that it is most tantalising to catch a glimpse of the outside world—to see red roofs and sun and little gardens, and young trees fresh with new green leaf, and to know that the air of spring is cool and clean, and that the world does hold free, happy people who do not need to toil. . . .

After the tea-interval, which lasts for ten minutes, and which is a fine scramble—the girls going in to fetch their tea encountering in a narrow doorway those coming out, and consequently getting a fair share of the brew spilled on their heads—work again resumes its normal brisk state.

The hands of the big round clock above the door are eagerly watched as the hour of six draws near, and the stir of excitement and bustle grows and grows until it reaches a pitch that cannot easily be described.

At last the whistle is blown, and before its shrill note has ceased, most of the girls have reached the dressing-room, and some have put on their hats.

One day I overheard a conversation between two girls which gives a typical picture of the way in which their time is spent after the hard drudgery of the day is over.

'Ah saw yer Saturday naght.'

'Did jer? . . . Walkin'?'

'Naow. Waitin'.'

That was all. And yet from these few words it was at once made plain of what their non-working hours chiefly consist.

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Many of the women are married, mostly with large families, and have come out to work as a direct result of the war—their husbands having enlisted and the separation allowance being inadequate to keep things going at home in the accustomed style.

Take the case of a woman whose husband had been earning £3 a week. She has three children, and her separation allowance—which amounts in all to 26s. 6d. a week—is less than she has been accustomed to have for housekeeping alone.

Now, in order to keep things going, she has to come out to work to earn an extra fifteen or seventeen shillings a week, leaving her children to the care of a lodger. The lodger pays 6s., which brings her weekly income up to £2 7s. 6d., and on this she is just able to get along without having to make any overwhelming sacrifice, such as, for instance, giving up her little daughter's piano-lessons—her little daughter, let it be remembered, being a budding musical genius.

It is a great 'come-down' in the world for a woman of this class to be forced to 'go out to work' for the first time in her life; but the fact that her husband has done the right thing—has enlisted—is enough to tide her over all her difficulties. She visibly swells with pride as she tells you that he was 'one of the first to go.'

Another, a young married woman, has come out to work to drown her loneliness, and, like Maisie, to see her separation allowance pile up. 'I used to sit an' cry myself silly,' she told me. Now she is one of the merriest of the party.

Then there is the little girl with the anxious look, who supports herself on fifteen shillings a week. Her board and lodging cost twelve shillings; her fares to and from the factory cost two: she has one shilling a week left over for clothes, amusements, and any incidental expenses. . . .

How they get along at all, these girls, it is difficult to imagine. An illness or a holiday throws them on their beam ends. At Easter time, when a much-needed holiday of four days was given, there was nothing to be heard on every side but grouching and grumbling at having to lose pay.

Alas! A silver lining nearly always has its cloud.

THE FRENCH PEASANT.

FROM the grey solitudes of Brittany to the sunny hillsides of the Pyrenees, the peasants of France have kept the land under cultivation during two years and a half of war. Their young men have all gone to fight, and many of the men who are no longer young; for no part of the population has given so generously to the active army as the peasants. In consequence, the greater part of the work on the land has fallen to the lot of the women, helped by the old men and the children. What they have achieved is stupendous, and their endurance has been epic. The results of their work have necessarily varied with the difference in climate, soil, and experience; but from end to end of the country there is only one thing to say of the French peasants: their effort in the war has been magnificently patriotic.

Their patriotism is, perhaps, less self-conscious than that of the educated middle classes and is rarely expressed in words, but it sometimes rises to sublime heights of self-sacrifice, as in the case of the old Breton farmer who went to the Préfecture of his district and asked to see the Secrétaire Général. 'What is it, my friend?' asked that very busy man. 'Monsieur,' replied the old peasant, 'I want you to tell me honestly if you believe we are going to win!' 'But of course we are going to win,' said the Government official in surprise. 'You are sure? You will give me your word of honour that you believe in our victory?' The man's voice and manner impressed the Secrétaire Général with a sense of something out of the common and he declared himself ready to swear by what he had said. 'Then,' answered the peasant turning quietly away, 'my sacrifice has not been too great.' He had lost seven sons.

The peasants give their lives to the soil without question in times of peace, and when war comes they as unhesitatingly give their lives to the nation. 'C'est toujours le paysan qui donne' is one of those common phrases which may be counted exact. He gives himself and his sons without a murmur, but his money he hides as long as ever he can. Yet it is on the peasant's store of gold that the success of the last loan depended. Vast sums of this rare metal were known to be hidden away in the little bare farm-houses all over the country, and every Prefect in France was ordered by the Government to institute a campaign in his district to

persuade the peasants—men and women—to bring their savings and invest them for their country's good. Eloquent speeches were made by mayors and members of parliament everywhere, and in so far as they understood the need for it the peasants produced, one after another, their hidden bags of gold. This is no figure of speech, for they literally brought the gold in bags and had it solemnly counted out before their eyes. An old man would give up painfully from five to six thousand francs, and then would turn to his wife and say 'A ton tour maintenant,' as if he found some relief in seeing her have to make the same sacrifice, for sacrifice it is to them, even though they know it to be a good investment. An investment is not the same thing as gold in the hand, and for anything which represents gold, even bank-notes, the peasant has a deep suspicion. What he likes are gold pieces, and no other money of the same value can reconcile him for the loss of them.

But loving gold as they do, they love the land better. The war has given us many proofs of the self-sacrifices of which they are capable, and stories of quiet heroism are common throughout the fields of France to-day. There are old women who work until they drop, there are children who do the work of grown-up people : you see them guiding the oxen with that extraordinarily impressive gesture which seems to be the epitome of man's command over the beast of the field, and in harvest and vintage time they bend their young backs to the toil of the soil all day and every day. Often they are laughing and singing, for the spirit of youth is elastic, and to work with Nature is not a bad way of spending one's days. The women, not only tired with work but worn by anxiety, find the strain hard as the years of war go by, and in the north and the mountain villages of the Basses Alpes, where the climate is not very kind, they are finding it impossible to keep things going beyond a certain point. This means that the land must suffer considerably in the end, also the population, and for these reasons it is being more and more recommended to them to employ German prisoners to do the hardest work. Here you come up against a limitation of the peasant mind which it is hard to get over. They acknowledge that the prisoners work well, but—and the but is a strong one—they complain that they have to be paid and fed, and their guards also. The immediate expense blinds them to the future advantage, and so they struggle on as best they can alone in many districts where the land is crying out for labour.

On the bigger estates where the landowner is in the habit of

employing the day labourer, German prisoners are used generally, and are said to be working hard and satisfactorily. Their pay is regulated by the Government and they are not difficult to feed. Whereas, if day labourers are found among the older men of the nation, or those unfit for service, they demand more than double the wages they earned before the war. Where a man was paid two francs a day, he now gets five francs ; and in certain districts during the hay-cutting season of 1916 men could ask and get ten francs a day with their food. Children are earning almost as much as their elders, and although the price of living has risen in the country as in the town, the proportion is not so high. The drawback to this kind of prosperity is that the work is generally too heavy for those who undertake it, and what they gain in gold they lose in health when the strain goes on too long.

The conservative spirit of the peasant is probably answerable for the way in which the farms are rented and worked when the peasant is not himself the proprietor. The tenant farmer as we know him in England does exist in France, but the *métayer* is much more common. Under the system of *métayage* the tenant undertakes to work the farm for the owner and to share with him both the profits and expenses. The owner provides his share of all that is necessary for working and stocking the farm and is responsible for the repairs of the house and buildings. The peasant goes halves in everything and does all the work. Besides his share in the profits he also has certain privileges. When he thrashes a stack of corn or kills a beast, his landlord allots him a tree for his own burning, and he has also a right to the dead wood on the farm ; but this particular 'pound of flesh' is always in dispute, and the Daniel has never come to judgment yet who has been able to say exactly and to the satisfaction of all 'what the law allows.' The tenant has also right to certain ground game, and it is astonishing if he sees eye to eye with his landlord on that point. Both sides are equally tenacious of their rights and a war of the wits goes on everlastingly.

Things seem to work best when the landlord is not an absentee and is a keen farmer, then the land prospers and owner and tenant work together for its good, although they may bicker among themselves. The wife of a landed proprietor who is running her husband's estate during the war declares that she prefers to give her farmers a sum of money for any real or fancied grievance rather than to yield the very least of the landlord's rights. 'Give them

an inch and they will immediately take an ell' is what she says ; and the tenants on their side are just as immutable.

When the landlord is an absentee the state of the farms is often deplorable. It is a common picture to see the house and buildings dilapidated, the yard a swamp, and not a whole gate on the place. You are told that the oven has fallen in, the well does not work, and the land itself is but meagrely furnished with the nourishment it needs to be productive. Yet the peasant goes on working, and what is more remarkable, he manages to work at a profit. By sheer hard labour, and economy that is almost misery, he puts gold into his stocking. There are no luxuries for his wife and daughters and their pleasures are meted by their leisure hours, which are rare. His sons spend their youth in the same hard labour, and as was to be expected, when modern ideas reached them from the towns, their youth rebelled. The girls left their old home for the towns and the boys did likewise. The spirit of the age called them and they went. Now the war has come, and far-sighted men are already beginning to work out the riddle of what is to happen to the land when peace shall come again ! The agricultural schools are being overhauled, new projects are being studied with the idea of inducing the children to stay in the villages where they were born, and the word has gone out all over the land to avoid dealing roughly with the peasant so that he may continue to grow food for the nation and be to it what he always has been, its most magnificent force.

To pass from one Department of France to another is like passing from one country to another, so different are the characteristics of each peasant population. Their costumes, their *patois*, their food and their customs have distinct characteristics ; and to know one Department well is by no means to know all. They even show shades of difference in the same Department, and to say that the Bretons are all this and all that, or the men from the Auvergne all the other, would be to be sweepingly inexact. You can only speak of them as you find them, and the picture of a grey farm in Morbihan must not be mistaken for an impression in Finisterre. Yet the Bretons, as a whole, stand linked together by certain traits which mark them as different from the rest of France. 'Ce sont les gens qui savent mourir' was what a Frenchman said of them the other day, and it is that quality in them which brings you into sympathy with them at once and makes you forget much that is not so admirable. They are idealists without knowing it. Their

poetry, their picturesque costumes, their religion, and, above all, their patriotism gives to them a primitive grandeur which not even their lack of cleanliness and their drunkenness can destroy. That bitterly ironical artist, Forain, once drew a picture of a peasant woman in rags, surrounded by a family of fourteen dirty, hungry children. She was being questioned by a visitor as to the wisdom of bringing into the world so many mouths when she could not feed them. The woman's answer was in its way typical of the Breton mind. 'They are our only pleasure!' was her pathetic excuse. And it is these women who have given to France the greater part of her armies to-day, who are, at the present time, bringing up more men children in the hope that they will reap the benefits of peace for which their parents are paying so dearly. You see them all over the grey fields of Brittany and the greener fields of Normandy in grim little groups, working on the land from which their husbands and fathers have been taken, and an immense pity seizes you for them. Many of them are not strong, for the evils of drink have played havoc with the northern races, there is very little play in their lives, and there is a natural melancholy in their blood which does not make for good moral balance. The best of them are the pick of the land, and the worst of them are not lacking in heroism.

The Auvergnats are a little akin to the Bretons in their taciturn exterior, but they lack their poetic vision and are not picturesque. They drink heavily, they are notoriously dirty, and to put it vulgarly, they would 'skin a flea for the sake of its hide.' They carry suspicion of the stranger to extremes and look askance even at their next-door neighbour, so that whether you are French or foreign, if you are not Auvergnat, they have a doubt as to your right to be in Auvergne. Yet they are a magnificent force for France. The statue of Vercingetorix dominates the principal 'place' in Clermont Ferrand, and the country through which he led his conquering armies has bred a stubborn race of men and women who, in peace and war, in town and country, work both well and intelligently. All the year round you can look across the wide plain of the Limagne and you will see them working, steadily, methodically and harmoniously. They are what M. Jean Richepin calls *bons routiniers*, for their land is cut up into small holdings and motor-culture is not much practised. There is more of art than science in their way of doing things, and the results seem to point to Nature's appreciation. They are at one with the sun, the wind, and the rain, and not a blade of grass or an ear of corn is wasted. Now, in time of

war, the old men, the women, and the children are doing all the work, and every square yard of their land is under cultivation. They grow immense quantities of corn and beetroot, two of the most precious products of the land. Their geese are famous, and in the mountains, as in the mountains of the Dauphiné, the cattle industry is immense. The oxen work in the furrows, led, in these days, by quite small children. They do all the draught work of the farm and are even harnessed to furniture vans or used as saddle horses by peasant women who have long journeys to do. Their slow-moving, mild-eyed majesty is one of the great features of agricultural France to-day, and there is no possession in which the peasant takes greater pride than in that of a fine team of oxen whose value can be anything from 2000 francs to 6000 francs.

Very different in type and spirit are the peasants of Anjou and the Vendée. Here you find a gentler breed of men and a more domestic type of women. Many of the customs of Royal France still obtain among them and they still speak of their particular *seigneur* as *not' maître*. They are religious, well mannered, hard working, and inclined to call that man happy who has his quiver full of children. Before the war, the women did not do the heavy work on the farms, but found plenty to keep them busy in the care of the house, the dairy, and the poultry yard. Since the war their lot is less easy, and with the rest of their countrywomen on the land, they have had to shoulder heavy burdens. A good many refugees from the Meuse drifted into Anjou and the Vendée in the first year of the war, and it is recorded of the peasants that they offered them food and sometimes lodging, but never money. The love of the *sou* and the possibility of converting it into gold is as much theirs as it is that of the peasants of a ruder exterior, and it is in this district that the *sous* were held up by the peasants to such an extent that cardboard money had to be issued.

The Vendéan farmer is a 'pleasant fellow' and in these days you meet him in hospitals all over the country, for he is fighting hard. He is quiet, courteous, patient and willing to talk. His thoughts are always with his wife and children on his beloved land, and although he has the fine, warlike spirit of the *chouan* in him, he is essentially a man of peace. He speaks well of his 'pastors and masters' and is not very violent against those set in authority over him who are of a different way of thinking from himself; he finds comfort in his church and clings to the traditions of his forefathers. He never fights better than when he is led by his own *seigneur*, and

it is a consolation to him, as he lies wounded, to know that his wife and children can always go to the 'château' for help and advice if they need it.

The relations between the peasants and the aristocracy in the Vendée are quite of the old order, and although the old customs are gradually dying, they linger in the villages like evening shadows and soften the thoughts to a tender melancholy. It is still the custom for peasant parents to consult the 'château' about the choice of a husband or wife for their son or daughter, and in a few places the châtelaine even now gives her arm to the bride on her wedding day.

It is typical of the peasant character that these pious Vendéans have also a very sturdy, common-sense, material spirit which allows them always to keep one eye on the main chance, and inclines them to behave to every man in matters of business as if he were a thief, although he may have proved himself to be an honest man many a time. The landowners, who appreciate and smile over the peasant's peculiarities and his ways of protecting himself against the wiles of his neighbour, tell good stories of how they go about their campaign. On one estate it is the landowner's custom to have a yearly sale of wood, which allows the peasants to buy their fuel on the spot and at a reasonable price. Incidentally, he also provides a very generous luncheon for his peasant purchasers, but it is understood between him and them that no word of refreshment should be mentioned until the business of the day be done. Otherwise, he knows quite well that he would be suspected of bribing them and of trying to get the better of them in their deal. Nothing of this is said of course, but all is understood, and when the time comes to enjoy the good fare waiting for them, their appetites are all the keener for having been held in check.

Not unlike the soft-tongued Angevins and the pleasant Vendéans are the people who live in a little village in the Basses Pyrénées, a village with a beautiful name, looking over rich and smiling valleys to the mountains beyond. They are a happy little community, and their serenity, though clouded by the war, is not disturbed. They go about their daily work with gently resigned spirits, and M. le Curé, who lives in a white-walled, vine-covered little house, administers mass to them in a church of the eleventh century, protected by a splendid and venerable oak from the storms and winds of winter. There is no fairer spot in France, and the people are as kindly as the climate in which they live. They smile when they

meet you and they sing as they work. They are pious but tolerant. The men are handsome, the women beautiful. They carry the pitcher to the well on their heads and walk with a stately step. Every house has its little cross of holy *buis* over its front door, hung there on the Eve of St. John and not removed until a twelve-month later, when a fresh one takes its place. Fields of corn and maize bring in rich harvests to these peasant people and their vineyards yield them good wine. You see the men and the maidens treading the wine-press gaily in the vintage time, while older men and women watch the juice trickle slowly into a wooden tub from which it is measured into barrels: half for the peasant, half for the landowner; for here, as in so many parts of France, the farms are let on the half-and-half arrangement and expenses and profits are shared.

There are no more interesting peasants in France than those of the Basses Pyrénées, and the study of their manners, customs, and traditions is an endless one. Their houses are picturesque and have some claims to architectural beauty with their black timber and whitewashed walls. Their furniture, like that of the peasants everywhere, except perhaps in Brittany, is scanty, for, as Balzac said: 'The peasant restricts himself to the necessities of life in his house'; and the picture which he gives of a peasant kitchen would apply to the great majority of peasant homes in France. A table, wooden chairs, an immense and finely carved oak cupboard, one bed or more; the beams of the ceiling hung with bacon and bunches of onions; the floor just beaten earth; a scarcity of cooking and eating utensils, and an absolute dearth of ornament, but not a bad supply of linen. It is not luxury, but where the women are good housewives it can be comfortable.

By grouping three of the Departments in this district together it is possible to get a general idea of the women who at present are almost entirely responsible for the cultivation of the land. The Landaises are honest, hard-working, clean-living women, with a strong sense of economy which sometimes runs into greed. They are religious and patriotic and very fond of their husbands and children. The Béarnaises have all the qualities of the Landaises, with an added frankness in their nature. They are less ardently Catholic and in some parts of the Department the Protestant element is pronounced. The Basquaise has improved during the war and has shown splendid courage and a pathetic resignation. By nature she is frivolous, ignorant, and not intelligent. She spoils her

children, of whom she always has a great many, and is greedy and not kind to animals. Under the stress of sorrow her nature has grown much finer, and it is one of the most touching things to hear her say of the loss of husband or son: 'If we win, his death will have served its purpose.' There is no self-conscious sacrifice in her attitude and her simplicity is admirable. The beauty of the women in these districts is quite remarkable, and the Basque women, particularly, have an innate sense of colour and music. In Béarn there is a little colony of golden-haired, blue-eyed women who are supposed to be the results of the passing of Wellington's soldiers more than a hundred years ago. Their fair skin and bright hair are all the more noticeable in a country where everyone is dark and southern looking. The farther away you are from the towns the better the type of peasant, and when you get into the neighbourhood of the fashionable watering-places many disillusionments are in store for you. But in the heart of the country, where the women and children work on the land with the men and the old customs between landlord and tenant remain much as they were a century ago, the impression is one of the most beautiful and dignified in France. The soil is extraordinarily fertile and it is not unusual to see the fields producing three crops at one and the same time: the maize will be ready for cutting, the haricots for gathering, and the turnips will be ready to dig up as soon as the first two crops have been gathered. Here, as elsewhere, the economy of the peasant shows itself in every detail. Only the head of the maize is cut off, and the straw is cut later for litter. The acorns are gathered for the pigs, the geese feed in the stubble, and of every natural product of the land it may be said that what is not used is not worth using. One of the old customs which still obtains is that of feeding the oxen by hand, '*gorger les bœufs*' as they call it, and you see pictures of the time when it was the custom to have the stalls of the oxen adjoining the farm kitchen, with a communicating opening through which the farmer could pass food to the beasts while he was taking his own supper on cold winter nights. Another old custom is the *course aux vaches* which takes place on the village green on public holidays or when there is an event of importance at the château, such as a wedding or the birth of a child. There is generally a house with a broad balcony conveniently near the green which serves as 'grand stand' and there sit the élite. The sport is a little southern, very picturesque, and not cruel. Like all old customs of the kind it acts as a link of

friendliness between the classes, and the landowners who live on their estates are very keen to encourage the continuance of all the traditional games as well as the traditional ways of working the land. They claim that such customs help to keep the people on the land by giving them something else to think about than work, which is at the same time a purely local distraction and not one which alienates them from their own village.

Every Department of France will show special peasant characteristics and what has been said of Brittany, the Vendée, Auvergne, and the Pyrénées would find a pendant in the stories of Touraine, Burgundy, Savoy, and the Vosges. But there are a few main traits which link all the French peasants together. They work hard and they save hard, even those of the exuberant south. Their very likeness to each other makes their different characteristics all the more striking and they only realise their kinship to the full when the country is in danger. Then they go as Frenchmen, one and all. A Landais will refuse to marry a Béarnaise, a Bourguignon may look down on the spicy dishes of the Midi, the northerner will be shocked at the way in which the southerner spends half his time with his wife and family in the café, and the southerner is horrified at the deep drinking of the northerner. The men of a white-wine country will never look on wine that is red with anything but disdain, and the hardy women of the Meuse will count the less energetic women of Touraine as a little soft. But when the need comes for a great national effort they make it in one fine harmonious gesture. The men go to fight, the women take their places on the land. All differences are set aside and two things stand out clearly: France must be defended and the land must not be allowed to fall out of cultivation. Whether they reason or not, who shall say? But they act and they act swiftly, for the terror of invasion is in their blood. A Frenchman said not long ago that the man who understood the French peasant understood France, for in every Frenchman there is something of the peasant. Nothing proves the truth of this more than war, for the world sees then that the peasant is France. The soul of the nation lies in her soil, and the thinking men of France are anxiously turning their eyes to the problems which the soil presents to-day and will present to-morrow.

The peasants have fallen on the fields of battle as corn before the sickle, and unless something is done to save those who remain and to replace those who have gone, the soil must suffer severely and France, the old France, peasant France, will fly with a broken

wing for a very long time. That she will fly no one who knows her can doubt, but she needs help, and the science which has sought to destroy her must now be called upon to save her. Science and machinery must play a greater part in the future, and M. Jean Richepin, in his eloquent pleading for the land and the peasant who tills it, recognises this, but he makes a strong appeal that the art of the peasant shall not be overlooked or in any way strangled. He says: 'En agriculture, comme en toute chose, c'est toujours et quand même, l'Art qui aura le pas sur la Science,' and he claims that it is the art of the peasant in his work which has brought him success. 'No machine,' says M. Richepin, 'is capable of giving a poem to the world, whereas the peasant . . . ' but see what he says, this great lover of the peasant and his land: 'Labourer, rompre, façonner la terre, en faire la matrice du grain, y verser les sucs nécessaires à sa croissance, y donner accès à l'air, à la pluie, au soleil, et cela en temps voulu, avec le tact, le doigté, qu'il faut, c'est tout un poème! La Science, à elle seule, ne saurait suffire ici. Et même sans elle l'Art y serait suffisant. Longtemps il l'a prouvé, rien qu'avec ses bonnes routines. Béni soit notre paysan, qui en garde la tradition, et dont la charrue a une âme.'

M. E. CLARKE.

CONCERNING BUFFALOES.

As one looks at its huge ungainly form and dull protruding head, with the wide frightened eyes, one is not surprised that even primitive man felt it necessary to invent a legend to explain how so ill-favoured a beast as the buffalo came to be created. Here was the opportunity, that primitive man loved, to explain the inexplicable by a wild flight of imagination into the regions of another world where all things are possible. Surely God himself could not have made anything so clumsy and stupid looking as the buffalo. And so in the far-off days when the world was young a legend arose and still lives with all the tenacity of a legend in the East, long after it has ceased to be actually believed.

Presumptuous man, runs the legend, eaten up with his own conceit, looked upon the lower race of brute beasts and in the pride of his strength boasted that he could create them as easily as God, if only the secret of imparting to them the gift of life were his. Whereupon God, Who hears the vain boastings of man, gave into his hands the secret of imparting life, and man set confidently to work to produce the form of a beast wherein to place it. Still puffed up in his own conceit, man determined that his beast should be larger than any other beast that God had made, and for many days he worked diligently upon its form. It should have an enormous body, man decreed, with wide and terrifying horns to push its way unmolested through life, as the triumph of human handwork. For many days he laboured with unwaning confidence until, at last, it was ready, and to crown his efforts he placed within it the breath of life. Then the buffalo arose, staggering to its feet, and after one frightened glance at its maker lumbered heavily away, its foolish head held high, vacantly and superciliously sniffing the air. In a flash man's folly stood revealed to him and his conceit fell from him. His attempt to outrival the handiwork of God had put him to open shame, and in his disgust he turned and implored the Deity to take back again the gift of imparting life, acknowledging his own incapacity and the divine omnipotence. Then God took back the power that He had given, but the buffalo He left to remind man of his presumption and his weakness. So the buffalo remains to this day the ugliest among created beasts, a standing witness to the incompetence of man to play the part of God.

There is no domesticated animal that recalls more vividly one's memories of the East. Even the sight of an unfortunate couple caged in a western Zoo, robbed of their Oriental setting, brings back with a strange nostalgia some forgotten picture into which they fitted with all the perfection of Nature's art. It was only a few months since they had formed so usual a part of the daily scene in the midst of which I had been set that the accustomed eye had almost failed to note them, save as small component parts of a picturesque whole. But to see them again in a western Zoo on a raw, cold afternoon, with grey clouds heavy with rain lowering overhead, brought back with a vividness nothing else had done a glimpse of the gorgeous sun-warmed East. Out of the cold and greyness one stepped again into a world of cloudless sunshine. Along the well-remembered road beneath the giant palms, moving lazily under the burning sun in the heat of the day, there comes a string of *sagars*, the most primitive means of conveyance in a primitive land. Roughly held together with wooden pins, their wheels of solid wood, they creak and groan like things in pain as the buffaloes harnessed to them saunter slowly by. Their heavy feet, clumsily lifted, scatter the red dust in clouds and the long string of them disappears in a purple haze.

One sees it all again in a flash, and as the picture disappears another takes its place. From a spacious verandah, gay with flowers, one is looking out across the garden at one's feet to the open country beyond. It lies spread out like a map away to the distant hills that the western sun is already lighting to exquisite shades of purple and blue. In the foreground, in half a dozen tiny fields ploughing is in full swing. The early rains have almost flooded the low-lying land, and the cultivator wades ankle deep in the rich brown soil, urging the buffaloes that drag his primitive wooden plough to greater efforts. But shout to them as he may, prod them with his stick or strike their thick grey hides, they pay not the smallest heed, never bestirring themselves out of the slow, swaying walk that brings them at last, unhurried, to the end of the furrow.

Then the second picture fades and a third one takes its place. One is back in the great city, the second city in the Empire, driving in and out among the various obstructions that crowd the main thoroughfare leading to the station. A constant stream of wayfarers, clad in every variety of garb, throngs the footway and loiters carelessly across the road, miraculously escaping instantaneous death with all the calmness and unconcern of the East.

Reckless *ghari*-drivers urging on diminutive tats clatter by ; trams that fill up nearly half the roadway rumble past with a noisy ringing of bells ; a gorgeous carriage and pair, with a Raja reclining at ease on its purple cushions, rolls luxuriously through the crowd ; while the modern taxi, the latest recruit of the road, darts in and out with astonishing rapidity but with more skill than prudence. And then in a moment amidst much shouting they are all held up. From a side street crossing the road there has come a string of carts. The enormous buffaloes, as unconcerned in the midst of the crowd as if they trod some deserted village road, move slowly onwards into the heart of the traffic, straining against their heavy loads, long-iron supports that protruding from the carts almost hit them on the back and trail out behind to sweep the unwary wayfarer off his feet. But heavy as his burden is, none of the sympathy that is meted out to the bullock, with its mild plaintive eyes that speak so eloquently of dumb suffering, is his. Always he wears that vacant supercilious look, whether toiling beneath the yoke or roaming at large in the fields, a look on which no one would venture to bestow his sympathy.

Then with a quick change of thought one is back again in an Indian hill station amongst a regiment of Goorkhas. It is the great day of their Puja, and the sepoy of the regiment with their wives and children, a picturesque cheery crowd in many-coloured garments, are gathered round a great open space just beyond the regimental quarters. In the centre of the open space is an enormous post some six feet high firmly planted in the ground. When all is ready for the sacrifice a buffalo is brought out and its head tied firmly against the post as near the ground as possible. Then a sturdy little Goorkha sepoy steps forward and raises his kukhri with both hands. For a moment he stands, every muscle in his magnificently moulded arms and legs taut. Then with one clean sweep he severs the head of the buffalo. It is seldom that a Goorkha fails to decapitate the huge beast with a single blow, and great is the humiliation of one who does so fail. The strength and skill required are considerable. It is not a pretty sight to watch, save for the unfailing precision and success of the blow, but no slaughter could be more speedy or humane.

Yet one last scene flashes across the mind before the greyness of the west descends again. It is evening and the sun is setting over the tall bamboos in a blaze of orange and mauve and blue. Between the bamboos runs the wide uneven road, the houses of the village scattered here and there on either side with

picturesque lack of symmetry. Straight down the centre of the road strolls a herd of buffaloes, occupying all its width and seemingly untended. Though usually harmless, the buffalo cannot be guaranteed not to make an unprovoked assault, and they look formidable beasts as they bear down upon us. But from out behind them there suddenly rushes the smallest of urchins some three feet high, and one knows that all is well. Belabouring the great beasts with strange cries and a stick half as long again as himself, he heads them off and makes a path for us to pass. It is an astonishing feat. Meekly the huge beasts obey this tiny specimen of humanity whom they could crush and gore to death with one blow of hoof or horn. To crown it all, as we pass safely by he scrambles up on to the greatest beast of all and lies face downwards full length along its back, kicking his heels in the air. Once again, as so often in the East, a Biblical word picture springs suddenly to life—'And a little child shall lead them.'

One buffalo was once responsible for a most interesting case, or rather series of cases, in the local courts. A *shikari* was standing with his gun beside a railway embankment, waiting for a train to pass, the embankment being so high that he could not see over the top of it. Just as the train was coming there strayed on to the line from the other side a buffalo, which lumbered across the rails right in front of the passing train. The buffer of the engine just caught its hind quarters and sent it flying down the embankment right on to the *shikari*, who had no warning of its coming till it was crashing down upon him. As it knocked him over his gun went off and brought the buffalo who had just escaped one sudden death to another equally sudden if less painful. The *shikari* was badly knocked about, and among other injuries broke an arm. The result was extremely complicated. The owner of the buffalo sued the *shikari* for killing his buffalo, the *shikari* sued both the owner of the buffalo for the damage the buffalo had done to him, and the railway company for throwing the buffalo at him, while the railway company sued the owner of the buffalo for allowing it to trespass on the line. All these intricately connected cases were sent to subordinate Indian magistrates for trial, and were the occasion of much anxiety and distress among them. 'It is a case of many dilemmas' wrote one harassed officer, while another began his judgment with the words: 'There has been much storm in the teacup of this case.' In the result, however, things squared up wonderfully. The owner of the buffalo had to pay for his buffalo trespassing, and for the damage it had done to the *shikari*

in its involuntary flight, but he got compensation from the *shikari* for shooting it, though the act was purely involuntary and unintentional, while the railway company was fined for 'throwing a projectile at the *shikari*,' a decision which was subsequently reversed on appeal. The owner of the wayward buffalo appears at first sight to have come off worst, but it must not be forgotten that in addition to getting compensation for his buffalo he had the satisfaction of eating it too.

There is one annual occasion when the huge ungainly hoof of the buffalo is an immense asset, and consequently is in great request. Among the Santals, an aboriginal people of many quaint customs and legends, there is a ceremony held every year during the Sohrae Festival known as the Trial of Luck. It is a picturesque sight in some far-off Santal village when the day arrives. The whole village is astir with the dawn, every inmate eager to put his fortune to the test. The long straggling street is soon a seething mass of men and animals of every description, from the smallest and nimblest of goats to the heaviest and most ungainly of buffaloes. All are being driven to one end of the village street, where, a heterogeneous crowd half hidden in clouds of dust, they wait the given signal. At the other end of the street, some quarter of a mile away, the headman and elders of the village have assembled. With much ceremony a circle, some three or four feet across, is drawn in the middle of the road and covered with a thick layer of freshly cooked rice. In the centre the headman, leaning across, places a new-laid egg. Then, all being ready, the signal is given and the cattle are driven slowly up the village street for the Trial of Luck. Happy and successful beyond his fellows for the coming year will be he whose buffalo, bullock, or goat smashes the egg beneath its feet. It is an extraordinary scene of interest as the driven herd moves slowly forward. The banks on either side of the road opposite the circle of rice are crowded with an eager throng of villagers—men, women, and children—each trying to distinguish his own beast amidst the struggling herd. In one solid block they come, broken only by the sudden onrush of a startled goat, that skittishly leaps and bucks ahead, to be swallowed up again a moment later in the close-packed herd. The bullocks with their mild complaining eyes move with a dignity all their own amidst the jostling, while the great black buffaloes, with frightened staring eyes and tilted noses, push heavily onwards, scattering their smaller neighbours left and right. In the middle of the herd, slightly ahead and moving straight for the rice circle, is the largest buffalo in the whole

herd, towering above its fellows. It looks as if the day indeed were his, and his owner the fortunate winner in the Trial of Luck. Within two paces of the circle he advances. Two more steps straight ahead and it seems as if the egg is bound to be crushed beneath one of those four enormous feet. The excitement is intense. But right on the edge of the circle of rice he hesitates and stops, creating untold confusion in the herd behind. Sniffing the air suspiciously he suddenly lowers the head that he has carried so high hitherto and for a moment gazes stupidly at the circle of rice that gleams white in the sunlight against the dust of the road. Then with a frightened start he swerves aside and, scattering the herd, rushes madly away. Even in primitive Santal land the race is not always to the strong, and his owner's hopes, based on those four enormous feet, have fallen to the ground. The other animals pass by in two long queues on either side of the circle, some treading on its edges, but none passing near the egg itself. Almost the whole herd has gone by, and still the luck of the Sohrae has not been won. Suddenly a goat darts right across the circle but leaves the egg untouched. It seems as if the luck would fall to none. The interest amongst the crowd is breathless. Only a score or so of the herd has still to pass. And then converging from the side as if making straight for the circle comes a young buffalo, a one-year-old half grown. With his head held forward as if unseeing, he blunders on to the rice and places his foremost foot full on the egg. A shout goes up from the crowd, and the fortunate owner returns home, with his garlanded buffalo, the hero of the hour. Through the coming year luck will assuredly follow in his footsteps.

A wild buffalo may prove a most formidable beast to tackle. Though an easy target, he takes some killing, and a wounded buffalo is a thing to be given the widest possible berth. One of my globe-trotting visitors once had a most unpleasant experience. He was Mr. Eldon P. Quintz, an American millionaire who, having spent his youth and middle age in making a fortune in the manufacture of rifles, had been seized comparatively late in life with the desire to fire them off himself.

'I guess if every rifle I've turned out of my factory killed one wild beast there wouldn't be a wild beast left in the world,' he boasted to me one day.

'Wal,' he said, in answer to my tentative inquiries as to whether he had done much big-game shooting before, 'Wal, I've just got to admit that I made rifles for thirty years before it ever

occurred to me to fire one off. But when it did occur, I just fired until I've hit well nigh everything there is to hit.'

But a buffalo he had not yet hit, and his keenness at least was refreshing.

It was a wide open patch of swampy ground in the midst of thick jungle with no cover in it at all, save a group of low-growing shrubs in the middle. The jungle was on three sides; the fourth was open, sloping down to an estuary of the sea. Right in the centre of the opening on the low-lying shore we found a group of four buffaloes, a bull and three cows. It was a long shot from the edge of the jungle on either side, but they made a splendid target, their great black forms clear cut against the open stretch of muddy shore and sky. They had not seen us, and we decided that we would work half-way round to the edge of the jungle, one on each side, so as to get them between two fires. Of course, as my guest, my American friend was to fire first, and I took the position furthest away from them so that I should only fire in case he missed and drove them towards me. Each of us had only one *shikari* with him.

Our plan worked out without a hitch, both of us keeping well under cover as we worked our way round and the buffaloes getting no inkling of our presence. Doubtless being more accustomed to jungle life, I reached my coign of vantage considerably before Mr. Eldon P. Quintz, and I waited patiently for him to shoot. At last his rifle rang out and the bull fell with a thud, but plainly only wounded. For a moment the other three stood absolutely stock still looking at it stupidly as it struggled on the ground, and then they suddenly, as if with one consent, turned upon it and began to gore it as it lay.

It was an extraordinary sight, and it being too far off for me to fire, I was watching through my glasses expecting to see Mr. Eldon P. Quintz put another shot into the unfortunate bull, when my *shikari*, who was standing behind me, plucked my sleeve with an exclamation of astonishment, pointing to the little clump of bushes in the centre of the open. Turning my glasses I saw my American friend struggling through the mud, and a moment later taking cover behind the bushes and aiming again at the fallen buffalo. It was a foolish thing to do, the little clump of bushes offering no shelter, and escape being impossible through the more than ankle-deep mud should the buffalo charge. A shot rang out and the struggling mass on the ground grew still. The three buffaloes at once stood stock still again and sniffed the air as if scenting their pursuer. Then two of them lumbered off into the jungle on the side away from me. For a moment the third

one hesitated, and then, to my horror, charged straight at Mr. Eldon P. Quintz as he stood right in the open, having deserted in the moment of excitement even the small shelter of the clump of bushes. I almost expected to see him do the one fatal thing, turn and run for the cover of the jungle, which he could never have hoped to reach in the heavy mud with the buffalo charging at a pace that was, considering its bulk, amazing. But Mr. Eldon P. Quintz showed grit. With the buffalo bearing down full upon him he stood and took steady aim. Whether he hit him or not I could not tell, but, at any rate, the shot failed to stop the charge. Yet even so Mr. Eldon P. Quintz stood firm. For a moment longer he faced the now furious beast, and then he was hurtling in the air, tossed clean over the great brute's back and plunging head first into the mud.

So great was the impetus that the buffalo had gained in the charge that it was some distance before it could turn, but turn it eventually did, with the obvious intent to trample and gore its fallen enemy. It looked as if nothing could save Mr. Eldon P. Quintz and restore him unhurt to the Rifle Factory that he so much loved. He had scrambled to a sitting posture, but that was as much as he could do. All his energies were employed in rubbing the mud out of his eyes. But luckily for him in the nick of time there came a diversion. His *shikari* had apparently followed him out into the open and had taken shelter in the clump of bushes, but the sight of the Sahib, of whom he had been placed in charge, being tossed in the air was too much for his nerves, and he fled terror-stricken from his hiding-place full in view of the buffalo. His *dhoti* streaming out in the breeze behind him caught the buffalo's attention and seemed at once to have all the proverbial effect of a red rag on a bull. Forgetting his first victim he charged straight after the fleeing *shikari* and, catching him as he fled, impaled the unfortunate man on one of his horns and ran round madly with him carried aloft. Fortunately he was now within full reach of my rifle and a lucky shot laid him out stone dead. The *shikari* was horribly gored, but eventually he recovered as a pensioner of Mr. Eldon P. Quintz, whose life he had undoubtedly but all unwittingly saved. Mr. Eldon P. Quintz himself was none the worse for his adventure, and the buffalo's head now adorns the dining-room of his house in Fifth Avenue. I should very much like to hear Mr. Eldon P. Quintz telling his admiring guests over the walnuts and the wine the story of how he got that head.

SHELLAND BRADLEY.

'JACK AT WAR.'

BY FLEET SURGEON.

If you were to ask the bluejacket what he thought of the Hun he would reply tersely enough that he was a 'blighter' and, provided that he was not speaking to an officer or a padre, the epithet would probably be well adjectived into the bargain. This opinion is the result of mature consideration, and the word itself is the worst that Jack can apply to anyone he heartily disapproves of.

It was not so at the beginning. The first feeling was, curiously enough, one of rather sneaking fondness for his enemy. He did not care much for the violation of Belgian neutrality, as the idea conveyed very little to him, and when we entered the war on that score, all he thought was that we had a thundering good excuse—and lucky to get it, as otherwise we might have stood out, which would not have suited his book at all. Jack is a good sportsman and an enthusiastic boxer, and does not worry about excuses for a scrap. He never loves his opponent half so well as when he is busy altering the relative position of the other's nose and eyes, and he looks on a 'thick ear' as a deformity to be proud of, whether it has been given or received. Provided the other fellow can send him to the Sick Bay for a week to repair damages he loves him like a brother, and spends his spare time in the dog watches getting wrinkles from his enemy, asking him to hit him in the same adjectival place again and again until he has mastered the knack of warding off the blow. He is always willing to allow the other fellow full marks, and is commendably modest about his own achievements, generally comforting the vanquished by the remark 'You weren't half in training, sonny!'

So, when the Fleet disappeared from Portland into the grey mists of the North Sea, Jack was ready for everything and anything that came along. At first he rather worried about the home folks, but as soon as the liberal Admiralty separation allowances were granted, he heaved a sigh of relief and felt that now he could get on with the work with an easy mind. The next game was to meet the Hun. This last did not prove quite so easy as Jack expected. The Hun seemed to be considerably chary about putting in an appearance in an above-water manner, and the only evidence

of his existence was given by means of mine and submarine. These worried Jack not at all, although they caused his officers considerable anxiety. Jack didn't quite like them—there was very little to be proud of in being sunk by an enemy you could not see—but he put up with them as being the feints of the weaker opponent.

Getting tired of waiting, Jack finally went to look for the enemy and fought the Battle of the Bight. From his point of view it was a delightful little affair and he was quite pleased with his part in it. It was scarcely strenuous enough in the big ships, but the little fellows had a good go and Jack cheered them on in the same spirit that he cheers a couple of the boys fighting on the mess deck. He heard tales about the Hun which rather worried him—that a rescued German had spat in the face of the commanding officer of his rescuer and had promptly been helped over the side by the captain's coxswain—and similar yarns about the grossness, surliness, and arrogance of our prisoners; but he put this down as a rule to the supposed fact that these were not the real German sailors, but only newly joined conscripts. Besides, there are black sheep in every flock, and Jack, having been more or less the black sheep of his own family for years, came to the conclusion that the blackness attacked the Hun in this particular fashion.

The sinking of our three cruisers by submarine in the North Sea came on Jack with a shock. It wasn't very sporting, he thought, to have sunk the ships one after the other just because they were trying to rescue drowning men, and he would have dearly liked the Hun to show a little good blood by leaving one of the ships to pick up the survivors from the other two. Jack began to learn and understand that this was war to the knife, and that he could expect neither mercy nor consideration from the enemy. This was still more firmly impressed upon him as he learned a little later, when another cruiser went down, that the submarine squatted amongst his floating victims for two days in order to get a chance of torpedoing the ships that came out to clear the sea of corpses. This procedure on the part of a warlike nation profoundly disgusted Jack, and he utterly failed to justify it by any rule of conduct he was capable of conceiving.

In the meantime tales of atrocities committed by the Germans during their advance through Belgium commenced to pour in and were eagerly read and commented upon throughout the Fleet. From the first Jack was absolutely convinced that these crimes had been done to order, and this was the element which puzzled

him most. Perfectly disciplined himself and understanding thoroughly the magnificent discipline of the German army as evidenced by the automatic successes of that wonderful march, the theory of black sheep could not be entertained for a moment, and to his angry surprise he decided that such things were done on purpose. The purpose he utterly failed to see, as such actions, instead of striking terror into his heart, would only have made him see red and sent him out to avenge them in the speediest fashion possible.

When, on December 16, 1914, he found himself out at sea, not to fight the German Battle Fleet but in order to catch and punish if he could the German cruisers who were occupied in the wonderful military achievement of bombarding Scarborough, Whitby, and Hartlepool, his wrath knew no bounds. The stories of Hun atrocities became for Jack on that day a living reality. His disappointment at our failure to round up the Germans was frightful to witness, and it was a sore and angry Fleet that went back to our bases on the 17th. From that day on the German ceased to exist for Jack and a new personality in the nations of Europe was born—the Germhun. By that name alone he is designated in the British Fleet, and the name will stick long after the present personnel is gathered to its fathers.

The routine of war-time did not press very heavily during the first few months. There was considerable excitement of one kind or another, and new harbours were constantly being visited as the German submarines found out the latest dispositions of the Fleet and made abortive attacks. At this stage of the war it is almost impossible to believe, when one considers the wonderful systems of protection that at present allow our ships to lie at their bases in all the security of peace-time, that at the beginning of the war the British Navy did not possess a single suitable harbour for the Grand Fleet adequately protected against submarine and destroyer attack. The biggest want of success on the part of the German submarine service is that during this period of lack of protection, they failed to take advantage of their opportunity. Whatever the real reason was, lack of knowledge of the inadequate defences, imperfect trust in the submarines, or unwillingness to risk their loss at the time when they had none too many of a good sea-going type, Jack only believes one thing, and that is that the German submarine service suffered from 'cold feet.' Certainly, had the same chances been vouchsafed the British submarine service, the German Navy

would have been destroyed during the first month of the war. Thinking over these and many other things on which it is impossible to dilate, every bluejacket is incensed and amused at the suggestion that we were preparing for war. Incensed, because if we were preparing, our preparations were the preparations of fools; and amused, because he knows what preparations were made and how stupidly the Germans overestimated them.

But, as it slowly dawned on the Fleet that the Germans had no intention of putting up a stand-up fight until at some problematical far future period when the mine and submarine, and perhaps isolated actions, would have diminished our numerical but by no means at that time overwhelming superiority, Jack found himself confronted by a winter of nothing but weary watching. Not by any means a life of idleness, as probably three days out of five were spent at sea, and the two in harbour were spent in coaling, provisioning, drills, and exercises. But recreation, especially hard physical exercise of some kind, is essential to the health and well-being of the British Tar, and our bases were almost useless for these purposes. The far-sighted senior officers, convinced from the first that this would be a long war, had started in at once to transform desert wastes into football fields and golf courses; small jetties for landing were built; huts and canteens erected on the grounds; and everything that forethought, experience, and sympathy could suggest carried out. But it was absolutely necessary that not a gleam of light should be allowed to emanate from a ship, as it might betray the whereabouts of the Fleet. In many, if not most of the ships, this could only be accomplished by lighting the upper mess decks by obscured lights which barely made the darkness visible and utterly negated any games, reading, or writing. In these northern climes where the sun sets at 3.30 P.M. and gives no light worth speaking about until 9 A.M., the misery of the life led on the mess decks can hardly be imagined. At the best of times Jack's floating 'home' consists of 21 inches of wooden mess stool facing 21 inches of one side of a bare wooden mess table 2 feet wide. His bedroom consists of two hammock hooks about 11 feet apart, between which is the hammock. His day clothing is stowed in the hammock beside him. For recreation on some ships a small room about 20 feet by 12 feet is provided, fitted with the usual mess tables and stools. His worldly possessions are stowed in an iron locker about 20 inches cube. For exercise he has the upper deck, absolutely unsheltered in any way, and the last place on earth one would choose

in North Sea weather. To smoke he gets under the shelter of a screen on the upper deck. At sea in bad weather—and bad weather is the rule in the North Sea in winter—his mess decks are usually covered by about an inch of water, and his air, supplied through a tube, blows with a chilly blast that arouses a curse whenever he tries to make himself comfortable. There is not a chair with a back to it, much less an easy chair for him, throughout the whole length and breadth of his ship. There is no relaxation of discipline possible, morning, noon, or night. Since the war started he has not had an hour's freedom away from the ship in the shape of leave, except on rare occasions when he has been granted a few days' leave because the ship was in dock and for the time being unfit to take her place in the battle line. Landing parties, of course, have been organised, and men are taken ashore for a walk and marched to and from the recreation fields, always under the supervision of an officer. On many days on account of weather, duties, or being at sea, even this small amount of shore-going is denied him, and it is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of men never set foot on solid earth for a year after the war started. It is impossible for a lower-deck rating to get even the smallest glass of beer except for the one bottle that is doled out to him on the ticket system when he visits the wet canteen ashore.

On the other hand, he is well fed, and as long as he can afford to pay for it, he is well clothed. There is no free issue of clothing for Jack. When he first joins up he is provided with a free kit, but all replacements are made at his own expense, the money being automatically docked from his pay by the paymaster. Fear-nought suits, sea boots, and oilskins are provided for him by the Admiralty, but ordinary uniform, caps, boots, and underclothing are a heavy drain on his resources. At the beginning of the war various charitable organisations supplied jerseys, warm underclothing, mufflers, and so on; but out of sight with charity is too often out of mind, and of late Jack has found the fount of charity run exceedingly dry.

It is almost impossible to convey to the landman an adequate idea of the conditions under which Jack lives. Use and wont cover a lot, and Jack is no beggar, and has not the foggiest notion of how to advertise himself. He contents himself with saying, 'Who would sell a farm and go to sea?' buckles on his wet clothing to go and keep four hours' watch in the wind and rain, and does his duty with a thinking sense of responsibility unknown to his

class in any other walk of life. He is keenly alive to the fact that on him depends the safety of the ship, and he considers and usually finds that the excuse 'I thought it was my job' justifies any departure from routine he may consider necessary.

Withal Jack is no hero to himself. He is a plain, simple-minded man, trained from his boyhood to know his work and to do it without any 'grousing.' His language is totally inadequate to express his feelings, whence it is usually garnished with many strange oaths, the literal meaning of which is absolutely unknown to him. Of late years there has been a great improvement in this respect, but even now he will reply to a remonstrance when his language is a bit thick, 'What the —— do you mean by saying I'm —— well swearing?' Drunkenness is not his vice although occasionally on shore it may be, for lack of other employment, his recreation. Generosity is his instinct, and children of all ages he loves. He has one ambition, and as a rule one only, and that is to get what he calls a 'drop of leaf,' and if, in the course of his service career, he is appointed for an appreciable time to a 'stone frigate,' life has nothing better in store for him. The sea is his enemy, and he faces it calm eyed, knowing that it is ever hungry for him and that death is for ever, in peace or war, lurking at his elbow. But he has taken his enemy's measure and believes that, with the aid of that eternal vigilance that is the price of safety at sea, he will finally wind up as a good old 'has been' in a 'whitewashed cottage' on the beach. There is more truth than humour in the story of the retired petty officer who hired a small boy to call him every morning at 5.30 with the statement 'The Commander wants you at once on the quarter-deck,' so that he might have the luxury of replying 'Tell the Commander to go to the devil.'

Generally speaking, he has tremendous respect and confidence in his officers; but this trust is never given blindly. The errors of the man at sea are plain for the initiated to behold, and Jack expects that his officers will know a great deal more than the men they command. No officer can shelter his ignorance behind the skill of his petty officers. He will be recognised at once as a fraud, and receive as a reward obedience but no diligence. And if the officer is not careful he will find his men taking charge of him. He has the deepest reverence and admiration for Jellicoe, and his love goes out wholeheartedly to Beatty. He loves to spin the yarn about Beatty that, in the Battle of the Dogger Bank,

he remarked 'I'm going up to the upper bridge. This place is overcrowded,'—meaning the protected conning tower—and remained on the exposed bridge for the rest of the action. And at the time of greatest stress and strain at Jutland, when big ships were sinking all over the seas, how Jellicoe is supposed to have sent the welcome message to the hard-pressed battle cruisers, 'You can stand off now, I'll do the rest.' The yarns are probably untrue or mangled versions of real occurrences, but to Jack they typify our youngest and oldest Admirals—the one all dash and the other all stern efficiency. Last of all, to sum up this analysis of Jack's character, he abominates a slacker.

Remembering his idiosyncrasies and the conditions under which he lives at sea in war-time, Jack's feelings as he settled down to the routine of readiness for action in the winter of 1914-1915 can be more readily imagined than described. The long hours of enforced evening idleness in semi-darkness had a woeful influence on his spirits. The letters written at this period were full of the same complaints. 'Why won't they come out and fight?'—'They might just give us a show, and then we could go home and be happy together.'—'It's precious dull for us up here with not even a scrap to cheer us up.'—'Why don't they come out and earn their keep at the job they're paid for?'—'Gawd bless the High Canal Fleet.'—'The first five years of this war will be the worst.'—'I hear that this war will last five years, and then we are going to get four days' manœuvre leave.' They jested—but bitterly. A rumour went round that mouth organs were being served out to troops in the trenches, and in response to urgent appeals a flood of these instruments as well as gramophones, concertinas, and melodeons overwhelmed the Grand Fleet. Jack is a most ardent musician of much vehemence and little skill, and these impromptu concerts on the gloomy mess decks were the most appalling torture that the wit of man could devise. In self-defence the officers of several ships began to guide this energy into proper channels, and several very good fife and drum bands are at present the welcome results.

But it was weary waiting for both officers and men, and despite every possible method of alleviation being adopted, young men developed furrowed faces and grey hairs, whilst in not a few cases the mental balance proved to be unequal to the strain. The proportion of sick was wonderfully low, less than one per cent., but the ill effects of this sleepless vigil were to be noted none the less.

The action of the Dogger Bank on January 24, 1915, came as a welcome relief to the souls who looked forward to a scrap to cheer them up. It was Jack's first experience of a big action in home waters and the spectacle of the sinking *Blücher* impressed the men deeply. It was death to the enemy viewed for the first time at close quarters and the scene brought no elation to Jack's mind, only a feeling of overwhelming pity and deep regret that his was the hand compelled to do this thing. One of them wrote afterwards: 'I was in the scrap at the Dogger Bank when the *Blücher* was sunk and we were all called up to see her go down. I was sorry I came up. It seemed such a shame to sink such a magnificent ship, and when I saw the crew running over the ship's side and plunging into the water I felt like a wicked child who had gladly done something wrong and then was disgusted at the result.' On all sides expressions of relief were heard that the other ships had got away, and a pious hope expressed that they would not be so foolish as to come out again.

About this time the labour troubles on the Clyde and in Wales were the subject of much discussion on the mess decks. The idea that strikes, especially in such important industries as coal and shipbuilding are in war-time, could be justified for any reason whatsoever was received with angry incredulity. Rather unjustly Jack believes that there can be no possible hardship in any job where a man can go to his own home every night, and the wages that were being scorned were such as he knew he could never earn at sea, although he got as high up in his profession as he could. In one ship a large proportion of the complement consisted of Welshmen and R.N.V.R. ratings from the Clyde. With a fine sense of vicarious justice the Welshmen went for the Scots, whilst the North-country men poured their invective on the Taffies. Words in nearly every case came to blows, and whilst the representatives of the affected districts settled their differences as to which was the more criminal, the remainder of their shipmates knocked the combatants' heads together. When the strikes actually did come about recriminations ceased, and for days together the Scots and Welsh were ashamed to look their messmates in the face. The most frantic letters were written to their respective districts appealing to the strikers to cease their quarrelling, which could only result in the destruction of their brothers in khaki and blue. Amongst the Scots was a well-known local union official, who wrote thus to the secretary of his Association: 'I am utterly ashamed of the attitude of my Association

in joining in this strike. At present no strike is justifiable under any circumstances, and the sordid reasons for the present one are enough to disgust any man who has abandoned all his prospects in order to take part in the defence of his country. There is not a Scot on board this ship who is not bitterly ashamed both of his Association and the Clydeside workers. At a meeting of the R.N.V.R. held on board this ship to discuss the situation, we all unanimously agreed that nothing would give us greater pleasure than for this ship to be told off to escort 250,000 German soldiers to be landed on the Clyde. The only excuse for your action is the grossest ignorance of the peril our country stands in, but such ignorance at this stage of the war must be due to criminal folly.' From several sources we learned afterwards that this letter did more towards settling the Clyde troubles than anything else, except the piece of poetry from the front entitled 'My Brother on the Clyde.'

Meanwhile the so-called blockade of Great Britain by German submarines had got under way and Jack watched the dastardly attacks on merchant ships and the drowning of their innocent passengers and crews with ever-increasing wrath and desire for vengeance. Balked by our anti-submarine tactics of their legitimate prey, the German Admiralty prostituted their fighting force to the level of cold-blooded murderers. To say that they entered upon their cowardly work with zest is no exaggeration when one remembers the *Falaba*, and Jack was painfully conscious that at last he was viewing the German in his true light with his pitifully thin veneer of civilisation stripped off. Jack, who had never in his whole existence balanced his own life for a second against that of a drowning stranger, has now to stand by—no! not quite helplessly as the records at the end of the war will show!—and hear of women and children being sacrificed in the one form of death which alone he fears—slow suffocation in mercilessly cold water. As horror was piled upon horror, appealing to him with a strength that the landsman cannot have the faintest conception of, a new Jack was born, a little older and a little sterner and more purposeful: no longer looking on warfare as a game of boxing where the referee will sharply call the offender to order, believing and hoping that he would stick to the rules of the game himself, but recognising that from the German the same tactics were to be expected as from the shark and other vermin of the sea; no longer pitying the dying enemy, but satisfied that he was making the best of a grim job when he cleared these pests from the sea; sternly resolved that his life

was misspent unless devoted to the task for which he was called. No longer are there any desertions during leave so that he may enlist and get to the front, because it is so dull waiting with the Grand Fleet. With all solemnity as befits the risks he knows the work must bring and clear knowledge that he carries his life in his hand, he is resolved that whenever and wherever we meet the German we must see this thing through.

It was in this spirit that he fought at the Battle of Jutland. There was no excitement and no skylarking as before other actions. Whatever the losses on our side might be, the Germans must be fought and held; whatever the cost, punishment must be given.

There is no idea of fighting a foe in the British Fleet. They are out to rid the seas of those who are unworthy of the name of sailor. For the Germhun is a 'blighter.'

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